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Kent on Sunday

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Mid edition No 759

ATTACK

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EXCLUSIVE

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Controversial landlord claims Tory wanted him to stand

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Less than a month to go to make a big decision

BACK in the days before Ukip, it was always the Liberal Democrats and Labour who provided the opposition to the right wing brigade.

It used to be that you could wake the day after local elections and be pretty much assured that apart from a tiny fleck of colours, the county would be true blue with red and yellow taking turns to be runner up.

It created, regardless of your political preference, quite a vibrant political environment as ideologies clashed and everyone was forced to raise their game as a result.

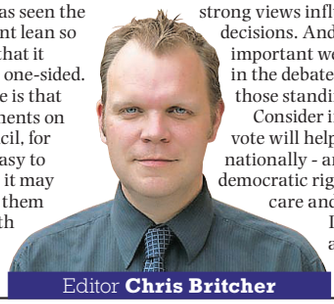
But Ukip's rise has seen the political map of Kent lean so far right of centre that it becomes all rather one-sided.

The consequence is that Ukip's role of opponents on Kent County Council, for example, is often easy to overlook. Granted, it may simply be a case of them getting to grips with a surprise electoral success, but it's still a chunk of our lives under which they have served.

All of which brings us to the county council elections looming on May 4. It's so often easy to think local elections aren't that important, or it's a time to exercise the cliched protest vote at mid-term, but the reality is that those we elect can - and indeed should - have a very significant impact on our communities. KCC is facing some of the most challenging times and decisions since its creation and for all our sakes it needs strong leadership and strong views influencing their decisions. And that is why it is important we all engage now in the debates and get to know those standing in our areas.

Consider if the person you vote will help us locally - not nationally - and exercise your democratic right with genuine care and concern.

It is important, and it will make a difference right here in Kent.



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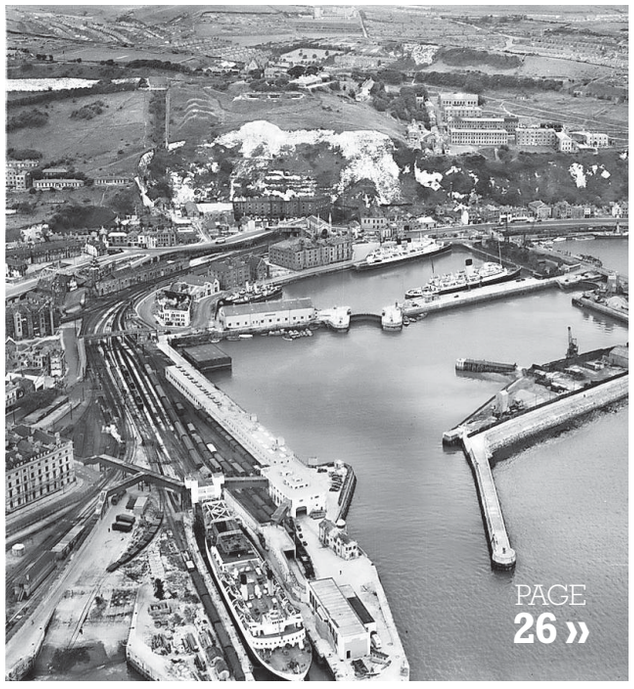

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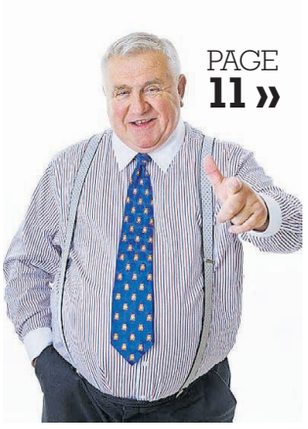

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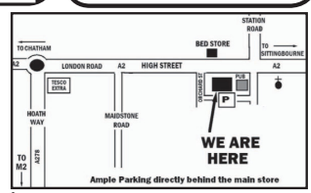

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Balloon bid organisers hold breath for record

By Emily King
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BEAUTIFUL: Scene as the balloons rose above Dover on Friday morning

ORGANISERS of a 100-strong hot air balloon world record attempt across the English Channel on Friday are nervously awaiting confirmation they have secured their place in the book of Guinness World Records.

Some 100 balloons took off early on Friday in perfect conditions from Dover in a bid to beat the record of 49 previously set.

With all balloons safely landing in northern France they more than doubled it.

However, Guinness World Records say they had not been contacted by organisers - Datum RPO and Exclusive Balloons - before they took off.

A spokesman explained: "As the global authority on record breaking, we are aware of the record attempt for most hot air balloons to cross the English Channel from media reports but unfortunately the organisers have not made a formal application or been in direct contact with us. The current record to beat was achieved in the UK in April 2011 and was a total of 49 balloons.

"Without the formal application the organisers have not received the official guidelines which are the rules for the attempt. We have contacted the organisers and sponsors to advise them of the process as we would be keen to help support their endeavour, and if our adjudicators are satisfied with the required evidence, would love to ratify this achievement.

"The organisers are free to apply online for this existing record title, and once this is received details will be provided to them on how to submit the required evidence retrospectively for our records management team to review and verify. "

However, it did not stop a quite remarkable spectacle as the multi-coloured balloons floated serenely across the busy port of Dover - shadowing cross-Channel ferries as they did so - against bright blue skies.

Andrew Holly, operations director at Exclusive Ballooning siad: "I'm always asked about my favourite flights having flown for 20 years all over the world. Without doubt, the Channel crossing flight in 2011 is my number one and the opportunity to repeat this was just too tempting.

"Crossing one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, in a hot air balloon is a unique and amazing experience."

'Traumatic brain injury' caused death of tragic charity pram race rider

A DELIVERY driver who tragically died after taking part in a charity pram race on New Year's Day, suffered a serious traumatic brain injury, an inquest was told this week.

Francis O'Sullivan, 52, known to friends and family as 'Titch', died at King's College Hospital in London on January 3 after falling from a pram during the annual race in Sutton Valence, near Maidstone.

Assistant coroner Chris Morris told the inquest at The Archbishop's Palace in the county town on Wednesday that the death of Mr O'Sullivan, of Turgis Close, Langley, was accidental, and a result of him sustaining injury to the brain.

His sister, Jeanette, described Mr O'Sullivan as her "beautiful brother" while friends paid tribute to a "supreme character".

Some 500 people were in attendance for the event in January, which sees dozens of locals dress up in fancy dress as teams of three to raise money for charity.

Two members of the team push the third member, named the 'baby', around the village course in a themed pram or go-kart, stopping to drink a half pint of beer at each of the pubs that line the route.

Mr O'Sullivan was riding in a 'Spitfire' pram pushed by friends dressed in pilots' gear.

The rules of the race dictate that at all times two team members must be pushing and must be in physical contact with the pram and the ground, no pushers are to ride on the pram, only the 'baby' who must remain in the pram at all times.

The main race consists of one lap of the village circuit 'dry' and the second lap to be 'wet' - meaning a beer is to be drunk at all three pubs, the Queen's Head, King's Head and Clothworkers' Arms - on the second lap.

It is not yet known if the popular annual event will be staged again this year in the light of Mr O'Sullivan's death.

Funeral of hero PC to take place in London on Monday

THE funeral of former Bromley police officer Keith Palmer - killed as he attempted to stop Khalid Masood's rampage in Westminster - will take place on Monday.

PC Palmer served in Bromley from 2002-2009.

A service for his funeral will take place in Southwark Cathedral with a full police service, followed by a private cremation.

During the week, a moving tribute was held at Charlton Athletic's The Valley before their League One game.

Players donated appearance money and the club handed over 50 per cent of ticket sales to his family.

Wreaths were laid on the pitch by his brother John Curtis and a minute's silence impeccably observed.

Craig David confirms extra show at Rochester Castle

CRAIG David has added an extra date at Rochester Castle after his first show sold out in just 10 minutes last week.

The singer had already announced a show on July 13 as part of the annual Castle Concerts series. Now he'll play at the venue on July 11 too.

Medway Council's head of events Carl Madjitey said: ''We are delighted to announce that Craig David will play a second night at the Castle Concerts.

''We knew the tickets were going to sell out quickly, but the demand totally exceeded our expectations.''

Sixteen years after his debut album Born To Do It reached number one, the star reached the top again with latest album Following My Intuition last year.

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Jail for gun club boss who evaded £1.3m taxes

A MILLIONAIRE businessman, who failed to pay any tax on his earnings because he wasn't a "paperwork person", has been sentenced to four years for evading more than £1.3m in tax after he was investigated by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

Peter Duffield, 62, of Crofton Lane, Orpington, ran two profitable businesses - a 50-fleet haulage business in Essex and a shooting club in Dartford - but didn't submit a single tax return on his earnings, including profits from the sale of three properties.

The investigation found that gun-enthusiast Duffield had failed to declare his earnings despite his bookkeeper and accountant urging him to do so. The judge said his evasion was "deliberate and dishonest".

Reckless has 'soiled the nest' too badly to return to Tories, says politician

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

FORMER Rochester and Strood MP Mark Reckless will not be able to rejoin the Conservatives because he "left the nest and soiled it too badly" according to a Kent MP.

Mr Reckless sensationally quit the Tories in September 2014, forcing a by-election in Medway, which he then won for Ukip. However, he lost it at the general election six months later.

Then parachuted into the Welsh Assembly, this week he confirmed he was defecting from Ukip to stand as an independent representative.

Significantly, however, he has said he will vote with the Conservative group, thus easing them ahead of Plaid Cymru as the main opposition in the assembly to Labour.

It is the latest big blow to Ukip after its only MP, Clacton's Douglas Carswell, confirmed he was resigning from the party to also stand as an independent. He too had previously served as a Tory.

DEFECTED: Mark Reckless

But Mr Reckless' volte face did not impress all Tories.

South Thanet's Craig Mackinlay, who was a Medway councillor when Mr Reckless served as Rochester MP, told KoS: "Like Douglas Carswell before him, they left the nest and soiled it very badly and that will take a lot of cleansing.

"He was my MP and the area fought very hard for him to win.

"It's never going to be clean when you break away but the way it was done with Mark was very messy and I'd say him coming back looks practically impossible for a long period of time."

Mr Reckless defection to Ukip was one of the great kept secrets in recent years - stunning observers.

Explaining his decision, Mr Reckless said: "I leave Ukip positively, having achieved our joint aim, a successful referendum to leave the EU.

"For me it is job done now that Article 50 has been triggered.

"I campaigned all my adult life for us to leave the EU. Now we are, under a Conservative government. I support Theresa May, and her team of Brexit ministers, to deliver.

"She has been steadfast in her position to deliver on the wishes of the people, building a united country that works for everyone and not just the privileged few."

STAR: Russell Watson

Tenor Watson to play castle open air show

TENOR Russell Watson is to play a special one-off concert in the grounds of Tonbridge Castle this summer.

The UK's best selling classical artist will perform his favourite tracks, and songs from his latest album, True Stories, on July 9.

The show will be part of the Rye International Jazz & Blues Festival which is taking place across the south east.

He is about to embark on a sold out tour, throughout the UK, US and Canada, before returning to Kent this summer, for the exclusive picnic-style outdoor concert.

Since being described by the New York Times as a performer "who sings like Pavarotti and entertains the audience like Sinatra", he has released ten studio albums and sold over seven million albums.

He has collaborated with the likes of Paul McCartney, Luciano Pavarotti, Meatloaf, Lionel Richie and Lulu.

He has also performed at the opening ceremony of the 2002 Commonwealth Games, at Buckingham Palace for the Queen's Coronation Gala Festival in 2013 and at the 1999 Champions' League final with Montserrat Caballe.

Tickets are available online at assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk or call 01892 530613.

City named county's top commuter spot

CANTERBURY has been named the number one commuter town in Kent in a report by a property investment firm.

Research in Vivo Property Buyers' regional commuter town series took into consideration key factors that are important to potential commuters such as housing affordability, commute length and annual train prices, as well as general quality of life.

Despite the likes of Sevenoaks, Dartford and Gravesend offering slightly shorter trips into the capital, London city dwellers are increasingly being drawn to the cathedral city, the survey found.

Jantiene Sobry of Vivo Property Buyers said: "There's a great cultural vibe making moving out of London an easier transition.

"Taking just under an hour to get into the capital it's easy to commute."

High speed rail services make it about an hour to London while average house prices are half of London's.

Drug smuggler jailed for huge cocaine haul

A FISHING boat skipper who tried to smuggle more than £80 million of cocaine into the UK, using a boat he bought in Whitstable, has been jailed for 16 years.

The haul, weighing 939kg and up to 70 per cent pure, was the biggest single seizure of cocaine in the country last year.

Michael McDermott, 68, from Waterford, Ireland, was convicted of drug importation offences following a week-long trial at Bristol Crown Court.

His shipmates David Pleasants, 57, of Peppercorn Walk, Grimsby, and Gerald Van de Kooij, 27, of Amersfoort, Netherlands, previously admitted the offences.

All three were arrested by the National Crime Agency (NCA) and Border Force officers on August 18 last year.

Mark Harding, senior investigating officer from the NCA's border investigation team, said: "Michael McDermott used his specialist skills as a sailor to attempt to evade border controls. We provided solid evidence that led to his conviction."

College 'back from the brink' with report

THE Hadlow Group has hailed its latest Ofsted report for its West Kent and Ashford colleges - despite still being branded 'requires improvement'.

The two colleges were part of the K College empire which imploded under millions of pounds worth of debt and taken over by Hadlow in 2014.

K College's last inspection was 'inadequate'.

Paul Hannan, group principal and CEO of group, said: "It was never going to be an easy undertaking to acquire a Grade 4 college and turn it around in a two-year period.

"Bringing an institution back from the brink is not easy – the scale of the challenge is considerable and it has taken a huge team effort to make the journey from Grade 4 to Grade 3.

"We had effectively been shackled with a judgment on the past, a judgement on a previous administration, which had no bearing on the standards we see being upheld here day-to-day."

A brand new Ashford campus opens in September - replacing the existing Jemmett Road site.

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MP's fury as Lloyds confirms closure of four county outlets

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

PLANS to close four branches of Lloyds Bank across Kent have left a county MP "appalled".

The banking giant is set to shut 100 branches of Lloyds, Halifax and Royal Bank of Scotland, including high street premises in Broadstairs, Hawkhurst, New Ash Green and Tenterden.

South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay has hit out against the closure in his constituency, which comes barely four months after Natwest bosses announced its branch in Broadstairs would close this year.

He said: "I'm appalled Lloyds is planning to close its Broadstairs branch in July. Is it not now time for different banks to utilise single premises?"

Mr Mackinlay has also voiced concerns about the impact on local firms, which was echoed by the Federation for Small Businesses.

Chairman Mike Cherry said: "It is very worrying to see yet more local bank branches being shut down, leaving small business customers without the services they rely on.

"Cash still remains an important element of many small firms and it needs to be banked at the end of the day.

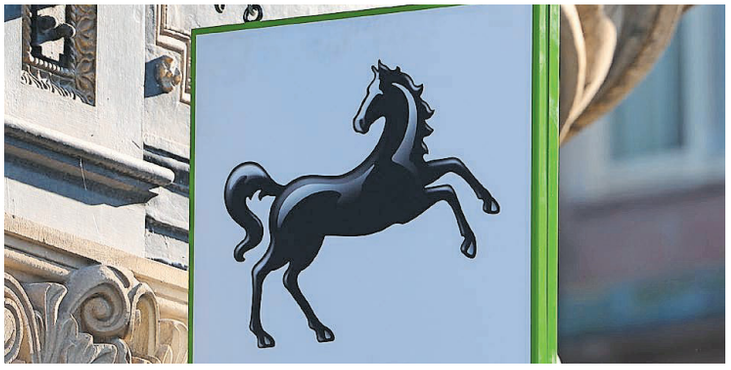
"For some small businesses online banking is not always a viable substitute, not least because of poor broadband coverage in many rural areas. While there are moves by some banks to allow basic services to be accessed in Post Office branches, the Post Office is not yet able to step in as an alternative with full business services."

A Lloyds spokesman said the group's retail division was cutting 325 jobs as part of previously announced reductions under a management restructuring, while 96 new roles will be created.

The 100 branches will close between July and October, part of some 200 closures announced last summer.

"These branch closures - previously announced in July 2016 - are in response to changing customer behaviour, and the reduced number of transactions being made in branches," said the spokesman.

"Our branches will continue to play a vital role in our multi-channel approach to meeting the full range of customer needs, and we expect to continue to have the biggest branch network in the UK."



SHUTTING: Branches in Thanet, Hawkhurst, New Ash Green and Tenterden to close

Lock on river to get £3m refurbishment

THE Environment Agnecy has confirmed it is to spend £3m on a lock on the River Medway.

The investment will fund the first works on East Farleigh Lock in more than a century, in the hope it will guarantee the structure for the next 80 to 100 years.

Reopening of the lock has now been delayed until the end of June after a structural weakness was discovered in one of the lock walls.

Ambulances hit by mindless vandals

TWO ambulances were forced out of service for 18 hours after being vandalised in Ramsgate.

Rear windows of two parked in Haine Road in the early hours were smashed. Nothing was stolen. A spokesman said: ''This was a mindless act made even more dangerous given the current demand pressures we are under.''

Death after car crash

A WOMAN who smashed into two parked cars in Folkestone on Tuesday night has died.

The white Citroen C3 she was driving hit the vehicle as it travelled alonge Weymouth Road towards the High Street.

Anyone who may have seen the crash or the Citroen before the crash, which took place around 7pm, are advised to contact police.

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Enterprise Zone all systems go as it prepares for tenants

THE North Kent Enterprise Zone (NKEZ) launched this week - promising to boost businesses and attract a host of specialist industries to the area.

The zone, one of 12 identified by the government in the latest phase, gives firms a host of perks including business rate discounts and super-fast broadband.

The zone covers Ebbsfleet Garden City, the Kent Medical Campus (pictured) in Maidstone and the Rochester Airport Technology Park. The first business occupiers are set to move in next year.

It hopes to attract medical technologies, advanced manufacturing, engineering and digital creative sectors.

Bernard Spring, chairman of the NKEZ strategic board, said: "This is an important milestone in its development. A lot of hard work has gone into developing the proposals for the zone and we have a strong group of partners committed to making these a reality.

"We look forward to seeing new premises coming out of the ground and available for occupation in the next 12 months or so."

Sandwich's Discovery Park is also an enterprise zone.

Duo who poured boiling water over victims jailed

TWO "barbaric" burglars who tied up a married couple and poured boiling water over their heads have each been handed three life sentences.

Kacey Adams, 34, and Daniel Wallace, 33, smashed their way into the Halstead bungalow of John Buswell, 66, as he watched TV and his wife Janis, 64, knitted clothes for her expected great-grandchild.

The intruders used cable ties to tie up the couple and subjected them to almost two hours of torture to demand the codes to their safes. The court heard the two defendants poured kettles of boiling water over both victims.

Judge Charles Gratwicke, sentencing at Chelmsford Crown Court this week, described both men as "highly dangerous, ruthless professional criminals prepared to use serious violence" to further their aims.

Both men admitted aggravated burglary and causing grievous bodily harm with intent at an earlier hearing at Maidstone Crown Court.

They were also sentenced for a tit-for-tat drive-by shooting after they were found guilty of conspiracy to murder following an earlier trial.

Adams, from Ilford, and Wallace, of no fixed address, were both sentenced to three life sentences, with a minimum jail term of 12-and-a-half years for conspiracy to murder, and seven-and-a-half years for both aggravated burglary and causing grievous bodily harm with intent. All sentences will be served concurrently.

Purse snatch warning

SHOPPERS in Tunbridge Wells are reminded to keep their valuables close following reports of purses being stolen.

Thieves are believed to have targeted people in the town centre, in and around the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre. At least three people were left victims.

Dog's river rescue drama

A DOG had to be rescued by emergency teams on Friday after a German Shepherd got trapped in the river in Tonbridge and could not climb out.

Firefighters waded in to rescue the pooch at The Slade, just before 12.45pm to save the 11-year-old pet.

Get your pills for Easter

PATIENTS who need medicines are urged to ensure they get stocked up before Easter to avoid running out when many GPs and pharmacists will be shut.

The Health Help Now smartphone app is also recommended to identify chemists which will be open.

Business group leader

TENTERDEN-based independent financial adviser Martin Tickner has been elected chair of the Wealden Business Group.

The group is a networking organisation for owner and managers of small and medium enterprises, meeting each week at The Little Silver Country Hotel, Tenterden.

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Garden city finally grows

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

A YEAR on from when Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn mocked the speed of development at Ebbsfleet Garden City in parliament, bosses this week announced more than 600 homes have been started in the last 12 months.

Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC), which was set up to help increase the pace of delivery of homes in the garden city, saw 614 homes being started over the last year - with 90 per cent of purchases snapped up with the government's Help to Buy scheme.

The EDC has recently secured millions in government funding for vital infrastructure,

In addition to homes, the city's first primary school, Cherry Orchard, will open in September, just 18 months after being given planning permission, and work will start in the summer on a new £12m bridge linking Springhead Park with Ebbsfleet International Station, as well as a series of new walkways and cycleways across the Garden City.

Paul Spooner, interim chief executive of EDC, described it as "a truly remarkable year". He added: "Compare this to the previous year when there was just 60 starts on site and you see a picture of rapid development taking shape.

BOOST: Chiefs describe the year as "truly remarkable" with 600 homes built or under construction this year

"Our private partner housing developers tells us that interest in the Garden City is incredibly strong and sales have been buoyed by the Help to Buy scheme which is giving younger people a real step up on the property ladder.

"Much of the success of Ebbsfleet Garden City is down to its location and the rail link that can get you into central London in just 17 minutes and developers report that people from around Kent who work in London now see this as a prime destination to live, especially with the wide range of housing on offer.

"With our commitment to forward fund essential infrastructure our development partners are confident of delivering 5,100 new homes in Ebbsfleet Garden City by 2021 as we head to the overall target of up to 15,000."

Labour leader Mr Corbyn famously said last year: "They've made 30 Ebbsfleet announcements and they've managed to build 368 homes – it's 12 homes for every press release. We need, obviously, a vast increase in press releases in order to get any homes built in Ebbsfleet."

Probe after racer's death

AN INVESTIGATION is continuing into a crash during a race at Donington Park which killed a Sheppey motorcyclist.

Mick Whalley was killed following a multi-bike smash during the Ducati Performance TriOptions Cup at the Derby track last Saturday.

He was rushed to hospital but later died after being treated at the Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham.

A second rider, Mike Honey, suffered multiple leg injuries and is being treated in hospital. Racing authorities and police are now investigating.

Our fizz for race winners

THE winning teams at last Sunday's Boat Race in London celebrated with bubbly supplied by a multi-award-winning Tenterden winery.

Oxford men's and Cambridge women's were victorious in the famous clash of the universities on the Thames, with the champions snapped spraying jeroboams of Chapel Down Brut – the official sparkling wine of famous races between the universities.

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CONTROVERSIAL: Fergus Wilson has received a backlash following a policy on potential tenants, and says Helen Grant, inset, urged him to be a Conservative PCC candidate. She denies it.

Landlord claims MP asked him to stand for Tories as police chief

EXCLUSIVE: A week after admitting he banned "coloured" tenants, fearing they'd make his homes "stink of curry" Fergus Wilson tells **Tom Pyman** Tory HQ blocked a bid for him to stand as candidate

UNDER-FIRE landlord Fergus Wilson has sensationally claimed he was asked to stand for the Conservatives in last year's police and crime commissioner election by a Kent MP.

The property tycoon, who has faced a barrage of criticism recently after imposing a ban on "coloured" tenants, fearing they would make his homes "stink of curry", claims he was urged to represent the Tories by Maidstone and the Weald MP Helen Grant.

Mr Wilson, 70, who lives in Boughton Monchelsea in the MP's constituency, says the pair met at an event at Maidstone Business Club on November 15, 2015, when Mrs Grant urged him to stand for the £85,000-a-year role under the party banner.

It is then claimed bosses at Conservative HQ didn't want the controversial millionaire to stand as candidate and tactically "parachuted in" eventual winner Matthew Scott, who was working in the office of Bexleyheath and Crayford MP David Evennett, in a similar move to the selection of Craig Mackinlay to rival Nigel Farage for the South Thanet seat in the 2015 general election.

Subsequently, Mr Wilson, though a member of the Conservatives, decided to stand as an independent candidate in the vote last May.

But there were question marks over Mr Wilson's eligibility to stand, with Electoral Commission guidance stating potential candidates cannot stand for election if, on the day of nomination, and on polling day, they have ever been convicted of an imprisonable offence.

Mr Wilson was convicted of assault by beating after hitting an estate agent in Folkestone in 2013, though said he had been given advice claiming he could stand after all, as his conviction did not carry a sentencing of more than a year in prison.

However, he was ultimately barred from the race when his nomination papers were rejected by the electoral returning officer Nadeem Aziz of Dover District Council.

The rules claim that the poll card numbers and signatures of 100 registered electors must be submitted by hand, which Mr Wilson failed to do in time.

He then applied for a judicial review at the High Court, but a ruling was made in favour of the council.

As a result, Mr Wilson revealed he was ordered to pay some £20,000 in costs, although the council was also required to find £6,000.

The landlord told us this week he is still fighting against the decision in European courts, but said "I don't want a re-run of the election".

Mrs Grant has distanced herself from the property mogul's claims.

"Fergus Wilson made his own decision to stand for the position of PCC," she told us.

> **"Lots of people make comments likening myself to President Donald Trump, but he's been impersonating me, not the other way around"**
>
> **Fergus Wilson,** on the fallout to his 'curry' policy

"I do recall Mr Wilson telling me of his decision to stand whilst also expressing his belief that the Conservative Party would not have him as their candidate.

"I had no involvement in the process at all."

Conservative headquarters failed to reply when contacted for a response to Mr Wilson's claims several times by KoS this week.

Meanwhile, in response to Mr Wilson's comments last week, anti-racist activists at Socialist Worker delivered curries to his home and business addresses in the county.

The landlord said the controversy started when he bought a house in Ashford at a discounted price because of a strong smell of curry.

He then bought another house nearby but said a mixed-race family left the house smelling of curry at the end of their tenancy, so imposed the ban "because I did not care to repeat the experiences of before".

Mr Wilson has also come under fire for previous tenancy policies in which he has banned single mums, battered wives, plumbers and low income earners from renting his homes in the recent past.

In a video posted on YouTube, the activists said: "While some want to take us back to the days when landlords hung signs on their windows saying 'no blacks, no dogs, no Irish' we're here at his business address to deliver Britain's favourite dish - curry.

"Let's hope the smell sticks but it's unlikely to mask over the smell of bigotry."

Along with the meals, the campaigners left a note reading: "Dear Fergus, we're sorry we missed you, we hope you enjoy these curries."

Mr Wilson confirmed he had received the curries, but as he told KoS last week, would not be eating them because "it gives me a tummy ache".

Instead, they are currently sitting in his fridge, though the millionaire insists he will find someone to eat his gifts.

The video also shows two guard dogs barking as the campaigners approached the landlord's property.

"It was a silly thing to do because my dogs can easily scale the fence," joked Mr Wilson, who has emphatically denied accusations of racism.

"I don't train them to attack coloured people, but I don't think there's been a coloured person walk down here in 30 years.

"It's a very predominently white part of Kent.

"They should have made an appointment rather than cold-calling, because I would have been happy to talk to them."

Mr Wilson also revealed he had involved Kent Police after receiving "abusive" Facebook messages and posts that show doctored images of himself and his wife Judith holding up property boards.

"One of them said 'I am a racist c***'," Mr Wilson told KoS.

He added: "I may be a c*** but I'm not a racist c***.

"A number of people make comments likening myself to Donald Trump, but he has been impersonating me, not the other way around.

"If they want to make a comparison, that's alright, but then they say rather silly things."

The police said it was aware of the issue and will be working to establish if any offences have taken place.

There have also been legal threats made to Mr Wilson over his rules concerning tenants.

‘Incident has ruined our lives’ say family after toddler mauled

Community still stunned after dog shot dead after it attacked a child in Chatham this week, as an animal charity says those who choose aggressive dogs as ‘living weapons’ are adding to problems

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

DOG owners who use their pets as “living weapons” to create a “macho image” have been slammed by an animal rights charity after a toddler was mauled in Chatham this week.

A young girl was left hospitalised with serious, but not life-threatening, injuries on Tuesday night having been attacked in the Jenkins Dale area of the Medway town.

At the time of going to press, Kent Police had released three people - a man, a woman and a teenager - that officers had arrested in connection with the attack.

Following the incident, the dog was shot, and the fallout has led to questions about how such an attack took place and what can be done to prevent similar tragedies in future, as it came just two days after armed police shot dead two pitbull-type dogs that attacked a man and woman in the street in Bolton, Greater Manchester.

Elisa Allen, director of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) Foundation, told KoS she understood the decision to kill the dog, and insisted animals’ behaviour often stems from the culture in which it has been raised.

“It takes a great deal of commitment, time, and money to care for an animal companion properly,” she said.

“Anyone who isn’t prepared to make such an investment – and that includes neutering and socialising the animal – is not a suitable guardian for a dog.

“Each case should be examined individually, but we often find that a dog’s aggressive behaviour has been caused by the manner in which that animal has been bred, kept, and treated.

“Also, almost without exception, those who seek out large or ‘fighting’ breeds are attracted to the macho image of using dogs as living weapons and therefore encourage them to show aggressive tendencies.

“These animals are often not treated as beloved companions and instead are beaten, goaded, teased, smacked, starved, or even trained to attack humans and other animals.

INCIDENT: Police outside property in Jenkins Dale area of Chatham where dog attacked a toddler. Picture: PA

“Even when not trained to fight, they have often been abused by breeders as puppies, so those who later end up with good families may nevertheless behave aggressively, particularly towards people they don’t know, out of anxiety.

“Humane options – such as using a cage, trap, or a looped control stick – should be attempted and exhausted before guns are drawn, if there’s sufficient time.

“However, if the life of a citizen or an officer is truly in jeopardy, the use of deadly force is understandable.”

Police have not formally revealed the identity of the victim, whose parents released a statement earlier this week, praising the response of officers and paramedics on the scene.

“We would like to thank all the emergency services and others who helped our daughter by giving first aid at the scene,” they said.

“We are also grateful for the continued support of the hospital where she is being treated.

“The incident has ruined our lives and the lives of our two children.

“We ask that people now respect our privacy and give us time to focus on the wellbeing of our family.”

As they continue their investigation, the force is encouraging anyone who may have witnessed the incident and filmed it on their phone to contact them - and not to upload it onto social media.

One man wrote on Facebook: “Personally knowing the family and the child involved and seeing the aftermath of such an event has shocked me.

“Hoping the little girl, which I will not name, is OK and is in the best possible care. I’m with the sister now who is shocked and shaken.”

Jaspreet Uppal, who lives nearby, said: “First I heard a gunshot, there was a dog on the floor.

“A few officers carried out a child from the back area of the flats.

“There is a little park there. I could not see the child, they were covered. I think they were quite small.”

Medway councillor for the Chatham Central ward, Vince Maple, told KoS: “It’s a quiet area of my ward so I was quite surprised when I heard about it.

“Obviously my thoughts are with the young girl and her family – hopefully she will pull through.

“It’s a very difficult time for the community at large.”

On whether there needs to be a touger crackdown on dangerous dogs, Cllr Maple said: “It’s about responsible owners and of course there are lessons to be learned from upsetting incidents like this.

“Generally, I would be concerned if aggressive dogs were not kept in a safe and secure manner.

“Upsetting incidents like this will heighten awareness and we will see more dogs than ever on leads and being controlled.”

Local MP Tracey Crouch added: “Horrible news from Chatham. My thoughts and prayers are with the child and their family.”

Enquiries are ongoing to establish the breed of the dog which will include a necropsy (post mortem) and an expert’s view.

■ **Anyone who may have witnessed the attack, or who has any information, is asked to call police on 01634 792209, quoting reference 04-1003.**

WHAT ARE THE LAWS ON DANGEROUS DOGS?

FUNDAMENTALLY, it is against the law to let any dog be ‘dangerously out of control’ in a public place, a private place such as a neighbour’s house or garden or in the owner’s home.

The government defines a dog as ‘dangerously out of control’ if it injures someone or makes someone worried that it might injure them.

A court could also decide that your dog is dangerously out of control if it attacks someone’s animal or the owner of an animal thinks they could be injured if they tried to stop the dog attacking their animal.

Legally, a farmer is allowed to kill the dog if it’s worrying their livestock.

It is also against the law to own certain types of dogs, including the Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino or Fila Brasiliero

It’s also against the law to sell. abandon, give away or breed from a banned dog.

Owners with ‘dangerously out of control’ dogs can be slapped with an unlimited fine, or be sent to prison for up to six months, or both.

A ban on being allowed to own a dog in the future may also apply.

Owners who let their dog injure someone can result in a prison sentence of five years, and if deliberately used to injure, a charge of ‘malicious wounding’ could apply.

Ordering the dog to kill someone can result in a 14-year prison sentence, while allowing the dog to injure an assistance dog, such as a guide dog, could lead to a three-year jail term.

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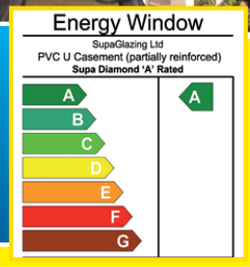

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Ukip could face 'total wipeout', claims MP, in poll countdown

In the first in a series of articles leading up to the county elections on May 4, we look at how Ukip could perform. Currently the opposition at County Hall, a series of blows since the EU vote have left many claiming they are a spent force.

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

UKIP'S time in the spotlight could be over, according to an MP who has claimed the party could suffer "an absolute wipeout" of its seats on Kent County Council in next month's election.

Questions have again been raised this week on the future of the party, with former Rochester and Strood MP Mark Reckless quitting the party in the Welsh Assembly and standing instead as a Tory-voting independent.

It is the latest controversy in a turbulent nine months for Ukip since the EU referendum, which has also seen the defections of its only MP, Douglas Carswell, and former Rochester schoolgirl Diane James, who led the party for a total of 18 days last year.

Elsewhere, current leader Paul Nuttall has been widely derided for making false claims he had lost close friends in the Hillsborough tragedy, and was unsuccessful when he stood in a by-election in Stoke-on-Trent in February.

Not to mention the infamous "handbags in Strasbourg" which left MEP Steven Woolfe hospitalised.

The party has descended into something of a farce, and having played its role in ensuring Britain voted to leave the European Union last June, many question what exactly it has to offer voters going forward.

Kent has been something of a hotbed for Ukip voters though, after winning an impressive and unexpected 17 seats on the county council in 2013, to become the main party of opposition to the Conservatives.

When Mr Reckless swept to victory in a by-election in 2014 he became only the party's second ever MP - albeit for barely six months as Conservative Kelly Tolhurst was victorious in the subsequent general election.

And in Thanet in 2015 it won control of its first ever council in the country shortly after then-leader Nigel Farage was beaten in his seventh attempt to win a seat in the House of Commons.

But even that victory has been overshadowed by controversy, with Ukip temporarily losing its majority in the council chamber, as pressure grows on leader Chris Wells for allegedly reneging on a pre-election promise to reopen Manston Airport - a promise Cllr Wells has repeatedly denied.

One of the founding fathers of Ukip was current Tory MP for South Thanet, Craig Mackinlay, who told KoS the morning after the referendum last year that he felt "the reason for their existence has now gone".

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Swale: Faversham; Sheppey; Sittingbourne North; Sittingbourne South; Swale East; Swale West
THANET: Birchington and Rural; Broadstairs; Cliftonville; Margate; Ramsgate
TONBRIDGE & MALLING: Malling Central; Malling North; Malling North East; Malling Rural East; Malling West; Tonbridge
Tunbridge Wells: Cranbrook; Tunbridge Wells East; Tunbridge Wells North; Tunbridge Wells Rural; Tunbridge Wells South; Tunbridge Wells West

DIVORCE: Mark Reckless, above, with Nigel Farage ahead of his by-election success in November 2014. However, this week he quit the party - something seized upon by opponents, such as South Thanet's Tory MP Craig Mackinlay, right

He also claimed he wouldn't rule out defections from Ukip back towards his party. Few would bet against Mark Reckless one day being allowed back into the Tory fold.

Speaking to us again this week, Mr Mackinlay admitted he could not forsee a repeat of its performance in 2013 and struggled to see what appeal it had left for voters in the county.

"Ukip had a purpose to get Britain out of the European Union and it can be proud to have been part of that team, but it's a bit like Ronseal - it does what it says on the tin," he said.

"What other policy have they got that you could put your finger on?

"I guess they have a purpose of not being any of the others, but they have no policies that are a USP [unique selling point] that anybody could recognise because their primary purpose has been fulfilled.

"Beyond being an 'I'm annoyed' party, the electorate need to ask what they're doing for them.

Continued on page 16

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Nasons at home

Continued from page 15

"The KCC elections could be an absolute wipe out, leaving them with a very, very small handful of seats or maybe even none at all.

"Labour could well lose a couple and there might be a slight resurgence of the Lib Dems but the Conservatives will have a very successful election, I'm sure."

Responding to Mr Mackinlay's comments, and referencing the fine the Tories were slapped with last month for "understating" election spending, Cllr Wells said: "I am interested in how he does his sums."

An investigation was also launched by the Electoral Commission last year into whether Ukip accepted "impermissible donations" from the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe (ADDE).

An audit found the ADDE financed polling in the UK between February and December last year, including pre-election surveys in South Thanet.

Both Mr Farage and Cllr Wells have dismissed any suggestion of wrongdoing, and the party appears confident of a by-election being triggered in South Thanet over the spending row, having already opened nominations for candidates.

Mr Farage has said on a number of occasions he would "probably" stand again, should any such vote occur.

Cllr Wells, who will be standing himself in the Cliftonville ward on May 4, along with a further 68 party candidates across the county, said he did not anticipate Mr Reckless' departure to have much of an impact on voters in Kent.

However, the district council leader, who has previously described his party as "the biggest threat on Earth", did admit some frustration over events in recent weeks.

"On behalf of all the Ukippers who work hard every day to deliver the services that our residents want, I would simply say the quicker our central party sorts itself out and works out who is doing what, the easier life will be," he said. "You would not find candidates who are harder-working or more in-tune to residents' wishes than those in Thanet."

CONFIDENT: Thanet District Council leader Chris Wells. He remains confident his party will perform well in May, but urges the central party to get its house in order.

LOCAL ELECTIONS 2017: THE BASICS

KENT has a three-tier system of local government: at the bottom are town and parishes, then there are 12 district and borough councils and on top of them all, one large county council.

These authorities all have different powers and responsibilities, with KCC being the biggest, and in control of things like education, transport and social services across the county, while it also sets the level of council tax we pay.

At this election, voters will choose a total of 81 councillors, down from 84 following a boundary review, to represent their own area of Kent.

Medway Council, however, is a unitary authority and completely independent from KCC, so no councillors will be elected from that area of the county on the day.

Voters in Medway will not take to the polls until May 2019.

The Conservative Party currently governs KCC, as it has done for as long as many of us can remember, and has been led by Paul Carter since 2005.

Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party are also represented on the council on a smaller scale.

Councillors are elected using the first past the post system, much like how MPs are chosen in general elections.

In most areas, you vote for one candidate and the candidate with the most votes is elected.

However in nine areas (Birchington and Rural, Deal and Walmer, Dover Town, Gravesend East, Maidstone Central, Northfleet and Gravesend West, Ramsgate, Sheppey and Tonbridge), you can vote for two candidates and the two candidates with the most votes are elected.

This week, parties across the county - including Sandi Toksvig's Women's Equality Party, the Official Monster Raving Loony Party and the BNP - put forward a total of 393 candidates for the 81 posts.

The party which reaches the majority figure of 41 seats will then govern the council for the next four years.

Polling stations will be open from 7am until 10pm on Thursday, May 4.

CHANGES: Consultation into the future of our rail service is taking place now and MPs are urging everyone to make sure their voice is heard

Southeastern hint at extra trains as commuters list their demands

Rail firm faces a fight on its hands to retain the south eastern franchise amid mounting concerns

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

PASSENGERS in Kent and south east London are demanding more punctual, reliable services with enough room to sit and stand, according to an independent transport watchdog survey.

A consultation was launched last month into the new south eastern rail franchise, due to start in 2018.

Watchdog Transport Focus has compiled research from commuters in the region, in which they made a number of demands, including the need for the next franchise operator to deal with delays more effectively than the current operator, Southeastern.

According to the research, off-peak passengers are calling for cleaner, more comfortable trains, improved facilities at stations and visible, helpful and empowered staff.

With commuters making up two-thirds of the demand, and most travelling into London in peak hours, Transport Focus says it is eager to see how future bidders for the franchise deal with passengers' concerns about getting a seat.

Commuters in London and the south east, who face particular challenges just getting on to trains, say their main concern is space to board the train and sit or stand in safety and comfort.

While high speed passengers perceive their service as a premium product they expect to see improvements like wi-fi included as part of the service.

Providing an adequate number of carriages with a layout that meets the range of needs of all passengers travelling across the south eastern network is also an important requirement for the new franchise, the research claims.

Transport Focus chief executive, Anthony Smith, said: "Time and time again Southeastern passengers tell us they want to see trains running more reliably.

"Passengers are frustrated with the lack of quality, accurate information during disruption to services. When things go wrong passengers want better information.

"They want the company to take ownership and staff to be able to provide help and assistance.

"They want answers to how long will the delay last? When will the next train run? What alternatives are there? We welcome the secretary of state for transport's ambition set out in the recent consultation.

"As with other franchises, we will be looking for innovation in modern ways to buy tickets and improved compensation when things go wrong.

"This is a great opportunity to boost the quality of Southeastern passengers' experience of their railway."

David Wornham, passenger services director at current franchise holder Southeastern said in response: "We've listened to what both Transport Focus and our passengers have told us and are investing over £70m in improvements in the areas that they said matter the most.

"So far we've deep cleaned all of our trains and refreshed the carpets, and we've cleaned and repainted all of our stations.

"We've spent £2m so that all of our stations have a ticket vending machine, and £500,000 has been invested in new digital information screens.

"Tablets have been given to our frontline staff so that they have real-time information at their fingertips for when disruption happens - and when it doesn't - and there are now 300 more of them out on the network to help our passengers.

"And our latest National Rail Passenger Survey results reflect these investments with overall passenger satisfaction now at 77 per cent - a seven per cent increase since last June - and overall satisfaction with our stations rising from 70 per cent to 78 per cent.

"We've seen a 40 per cent growth in passengers since 2006 and we know crowding is an issue.

"We are working with the government on a proposal to bring additional trains to our network sooner, rather than wait until the new contract starts at the end of 2018, and we are hopeful for a positive response.

"We know there is still more to do and we're finding new ways to work with our industry partners to better the services our passengers receive.

"We're working closely with Network Rail to improve performance and reduce delays and our joint performance team are working together to ensure our trains run on time."

Southeastern has confirmed it will be bidding for the next franchise and is likely to be the hot favourite to retain it when a decision is made next summer.

CONCERNED: Gareth Johnson

Though only launched last month, the consultation has already come under intense criticism.

One part of the document proposed that trains from north Kent and Bexleyheath run only to Cannon Street.

More than 16,000 people have already signed a petition urging the government not to cut services to Charing Cross and Victoria, saying the plans would make the lives of passengers "a misery".

Dartford MP Gareth Johnson described the proposals as "unacceptable".

He said: "We are seeing hundreds of new homes being built in Dartford every year and therefore we need investment in infrastructure and not reductions.

"If these changes were to take place, then hundreds of Dartford commuters would be expected to travel to Cannon Street and then find a way of travelling to the part of London they actually want to go to, placing extra strain on existing services and extra cost to passengers.

"The changes at London Bridge have caused enough problems without there being a drastic reduction in the locations you can travel to in London from Dartford.

"I met with the rail minister last week to express my disdain at this idea. He said this issue is very much an idea for discussion, not a government policy, and indicated there is no set intention to reduce the number of destinations served by Dartford station.

"However, I know this issue is causing huge anxiety to local commuters as a large number of people rely on the current destinations to get to work. That is why I feel it is important that people respond to the consultation so the Department for Transport is left in no doubt about the strong objections to this idea in Dartford and beyond."

Transport secretary Chris Grayling defended the consultation, insisting no decisions had been made and that "if the answer is 'we don't want you to do that', we will listen".

The Department for Transport was also forced to admit some housing figures in the document were "too low" in a letter to Labour MP for Erith and Thamesmead, Teresa Pearce.

Meet the very real Blackadder, Baldrick and Mrs Miggins

TV channel comes up with a cunning plan to promote its new documentaries

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

BLACKADDER is hailed by many as the greatest comedy series ever written - and for one pilot from Kent it has had a profound influence.

Because Robert Blackadder, 22, has grown up with his surname being synonymous with the classic character made famous by Rowan Atkinson.

And this week he came face to face with the real-life Baldrick, Darling and even Mrs Miggins to launch a new series of TV programmes celebrating the sitcom and the periods in history in which each series were set.

The Yesterday channel is running the Blackadder's History season starting from Monday April 10 from 7pm, and available to catch up on UKTV Play, featuring all episodes of the classic series next to documentaries about each era.

And in a fascinating parallel to their namesakes from the show, four members of the public - Robert Blackadder, Luke Baldrick, Kevin Darling and Hayley Miggins - gathered at the Tower of London, a reoccurring location throughout the four series, to reveal their personal connections.

Robert Blackadder, from Romney Marsh, is a qualified pilot who was inspired by his great great uncle William Francis Blackadder, one of The Few - the name given by Winston Churchill to the brave Allied airmen of the Royal Air Force who fought the Battle of Britain in the Second World War.

He said: "I have been brought up with the Blackadder series, and certain phrases are part of the family vernacular - especially when it comes to having 'cunning plans' and 'sensible policies for a happier Britain'.

"The whole family are huge fans and I can recite huge chunks of the Blackadder scripts. Blackadder is an old Berwick name and the ancestry can be traced back for centuries, most firstborn are called Robert, David or John rather than Edmund.

"It's strange being called Blackadder - most people have heard of the show and call you Slackie, Blackie, Slackbladder or whatever. We are very lucky to have a surname associated with one of the most well-loved comedy series ever made, people tend not to forget your name - it can be burden though as sometimes people don't believe you or think you're joking.

REUNION: Mrs Miggins, Baldrick, Darling and Blackadder (the real ones)

"My great great uncle William Francis Blackadder joined the auxiliary air force in 1936, becoming part of 607 Squadron and saw action in northern France at the start of the Second World War, before flying fighters during the Battle of Britain. He survived the war and lived until 1997 – and his story has been absolutely inspirational in firing my passion for aviation in general and vintage Second World War aircraft in particular.

"I regard it as an absolute privilege to able to fly in the same skies over Kent where he served and to be able to follow in his footsteps. It is my ambition to one day fly a Spitfire over the Capel-Le-Ferne memorial in his honour."

The series, which starred Rowan Atkinson in the title role and Sir Tony Robinson as his faithful servant Baldrick, first appeared on BBC1 in 1983 - and ran to four series and three specials before the final episode aired in 1989.

The fourth was set in World War One - and student Luke Baldrick, 22, revealed that his great grandfather David Baldrick also served in the Great War, returning home after suffering a shrapnel injury to his leg.

Mr Baldrick, a third year business studies student at Liverpool John Moores University, originally from Londonderry, Northern Ireland, said: "David Baldrick was a farmer near Derry from back home in Ireland, who went to fight for his country. There's certainly not been too many of us Baldricks ever since, although I've a met a couple in America via Facebook."

The final Blackadder Goes Forth series also featured Captain Kevin Darling played by Tim McInnerny - and Kevin Darling, 59, a construction consultant specialising in land and

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FAMILY: Robert Blackadder and Edmund, left, above William Blackadder

construction disputes, from Upminster, Essex, describes himself as 'a pen pusher, just like the other Darling'.

He said: "I love the series despite having people regularly say to me, 'not now, Darling' for the past 28 years. And having traced my family back several generations, I've discovered that my grandfather Albert Darling, who was born in 1891, also served in the First World War.

"Our family history goes back 13 generations, to 1565 – and I've discovered that we had Darlings in the military well before my namesake in Blackadder Goes Forth."

Each Blackadder series was set in a different period of British history, beginning in 1485 and ending in 1917, and comprised six half-hour episodes. The first series was called The Black Adder and was set in the fictional reign of Richard IV.

The second series, Blackadder II, was set during the reign of Elizabeth I. Blackadder the Third was set during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in the reign of George III, and Blackadder Goes Forth was set in 1917 in the trenches of the Great War.

One of the most popular characters was Mrs Miggins, played by Helen Atkinson-Wood and famous for her pies and other wares at her coffee shop – and Hayley Miggins, 32, from Preston, Lancashire, describes herself as a lover of pies thanks to her traditional home town cooking.

She said: "Lancashire is the home of the meat and potato pie, and pies don't come any better than that. And I've always been a great foodie, not least because my mum is from Italian descent.

"Although unlike Mrs Miggins, sadly I've never owned a pie shop, in fact I'm more closely linked to the final series set in the First World War, as I work in the defence industry.

"And to this day the name Mrs Miggins is always likely to be mentioned whenever I give my name - although as a family we've always loved being recognised in the same breath as such a comedy classic as Blackadder."

Sir Tony Robinson, who played Baldrick in every episode of Blackadder, said: "I am so proud of being part of the Blackadder team. I think it's one of the highlights of my working life.

"The fact that people come up to me almost every day and say that either they learned about history because they were inspired by Blackadder or their kids learned about history for the same reason makes me bristle with pride."

Adrian Wills, general manager for Yesterday, added: "Blackadder is one of the greatest British TV creations of all time, and we are excited to celebrate Blackadder's legacy through a uniquely historical viewpoint which we hope will fascinate our viewers."

• Blackadder's History runs April 10 to 21, 7pm, on Yesterday. It features all episodes of the sitcom next to the documentaries.

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IMPACT: Lee Stay, left, contracted both HIV and hepatitis C through contaminated blood, resulting in a string of health problems. Steve Dymond, right, suffered from hepatitis C.

Contamination victims' anger at government payment changes

Chris Britcher on the latest blow to those seeking justice and compensation for bad blood infections

VICTIMS of the blood contamination scandal say proposed changes by the government to support payments "is nothing short of a cycnical ploy to rob Peter to pay Paul".

The government unveiled a major shake-up of how those infected with either hepatitis C or HIV last July would receive cash, pledging an extra £125 million for beneficiaries.

But a consultation into changes to those payments ends soon after it transpired it was on track to see the Department of Health overspend the budget by between £76m to £123m.

During the 1970s and 80s, thousands of people - primarily haemophiliacs who need treatment to help their blood clot - were administered by the NHS with infected blood products.

With companies sourcing blood from prisons, drug addicts and others, particularly in the US, many patients became infected and many have since died.

Prime minister David Cameron apologised to the victims in March 2015 but calls for a Hillsborough-style public inquiry into the circumstances around the scandal in England have fallen on deaf ears. Survivors, who have seen their lives so damaged, are demanding justice - and answers to just what officials at the time knew of the risks.

But after their calls for compensation lump sums to be paid were rejected, they are now fuming at the risk of losing money they thought they have been promised. In particular, those who are co-infected with HIV and hepatitis C are set to be hit in the pocket.

Announced last July, the payments would see those with chronic hepatitis C infection - known as stage one infection - receive payments, with those with an advanced condition - stage two and HIV - receiving an increase.

However, an increase in the number expected to claim for that has meant a consultation into changes for other payments to prevent it running over budget.

Lee Stay, from Ramsgate, was given infected blood as a teenager. He discovered he had contracted HIV when he was 16 in 1986 - when diagnosis was a death sentence - and told he could expect to live another 10 years. He also was infected with hepatitis C which damages the liver. He revealed his condition, exclusively, to KoS last year.

Now 47, he explained: "Whilst I welcome the fact that the government recognises that many of those currently infected with hepatitis C at stage one will require the additional financial help that stage two provides due to ongoing deterioration of their health, I am appalled that rather than increase the overall funding of the scheme, this change is to be paid for by removing the future fixed increase previously proposed for all existing scheme recipients in 2018/19 and replacing it with increases in line with the consumer price indext (CPI) - a much smaller amount.

"On top of this, there is much uncertainty regarding discretionary payments, which many recipients are dependant on to sustain any kind of normal life they would have lived if they had not been infected.

"It seems the amout of money available for this discretionary support will be more than halved to fund the change to the scheme.

"As one of only around 250 co-infected with HIV and hepatitis C still alive, relying on discretionary support, this will affect me the most. How can those most affected by this disaster, suffering decades of ill-health due to multiple illnesses - in my case pneumonia, liver failure, lymphoma - caused by several viruses being present in contaminated blood through no fault of my own, finish up losing out more than anyone else?

"It is not fair the government are determined to fund the scheme out of the NHS budget, deliberately provoking opinion by saying that any increase in budget would take money away from patient care. Surely the funding should come directly from the Treasury? This disaster was caused by government decisions made decades ago - why should today's NHS budget be affected to right a wrong back in the 1970s and 80s?

"It is exactly two years since David Cameron apologised for this disaster, yet most of the worse affected are barely better off today - in fact many expect to be worse off despite government promises to the contray due to the proposed changes in the discretionary payments.

"They should hold their hands up, admit that this disaster could have largely been avoided at the time and now compensate all those affected properly."

Steve Dymond, 60, from Broadstairs was infected with hepatitis C. He added: "In January 2016, the Department of Health launched a consultation on improving how support was provided to victims of contaminated blood. It closed in April and the final policy decisions were announced last July - and extremely unsatisfactory they were.

"Earlier in March this year, the junior health minister Nicola Blackwood issued a statement launching a new consultation. Somewhat ironically the consultation process closes on World Haemophilia Day, April 17.

"Facing legal action for discriminating against certain victims who contracted hepatitis C from contaminated blood products, the Department of Health have decided to spread the inadequate contents of this meagre pot even more thinly.

"It is in effect nothing short of a cynical ploy to rob Peter to pay Paul.

"All of this contradicts the pledge made by David Cameron when PM that no one should be worse off under any reformed system. It is yet still further away from any full and proper settlement which would enable victims and their families to live their remaining years with some modicum of security and dignity."

In a letter to health secretary Jeremy Hunt, campaign group Tainted Blood added: "The brevity of the consultation in no way reflects the gravamen of the situation the victims are in through no fault of their own. We believe it is wrong, and more than likely, unlawful, to deprive vulnerable beneficiaries of what is a significant annual increase to their regular payments, which you unequivocally promised, both verbally and in writing, and was also made plain directly to our group as part of the hard-and-fast policy of July 2016.

"We believe it would be unconscionable for you to go through with your proposed move.

"It is clear that from a legal perspective you believe you are acting correctly, but it cannot be morally right to undertake an action which further damages people simply in order to avoid being challenged in court.

"In fact, our most recent advice suggests that your proposed action – if it becomes policy – could well result in further legal challenges as it would be inherently unfair."

In a statement, the Department of Health said: "This was an unprecedented tragedy, and we are continuing to work closely with those affected to make sure the right support is in place for them.

"We have more than doubled our annual spend on payments to people affected since 2015, committing an additional £125m, as well as providing an annual payment to all infected individuals. This is significantly more than any previous government has provided for those affected by this tragedy.

"We will continue to listen and are currently consulting on new measures to extend the group of individuals who benefit from higher annual payments."

It reiterated claims no-one who currently receives an annual payment will be worse off than they are now and said many beneficiaries, namely those with chronic hepatitis C infection, may benefit from an increase in annual payment. The consultation can be found on the department's website.

BOOST: The Fairtrade mark is well known now and many will say it is changing lives in developing countries on a daily basis. But some academics say it simply is not doing enough.

Is Fairtrade still building lives and engaging our communities?

So popular 10 year ago, **Chris Murphy** asks whether the appetite still exists for sustainability scheme

TIGHTENING of council budgets, the decline of our high streets and uncertainty over Brexit has seen the once flavour of the month Fairtrade movement fall in public perception - and led some senior academics in the county to question its effectiveness.

Designed to promote sustainable communities and tackle poverty in the developing world, Fairtrade works through selling products - most notably the likes of coffee, bananas, tea and chocolate - where the producers have been paid a living wage.

In addition, it was 10 years ago Sevenoaks became a Fairtrade town - the first in Kent - and it sparked a flurry of others to follow suit.

Needing support from the local council, the status encourages businesses to stock Fairtrade-badged products and engage the community in the key issues.

Jo James is the chief executive of the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce.

She explained: "It is quite patchy across the county, but Canterbury is probably a good example of where it is really working.

"A few years ago there was a lot more awareness around Fairtrade products, but it seems to have taken a back seat recently.

"Mind you, thinking of our political scene over the past few years, it seems we have had a lot to contend with on the home front."

But, she added: "Buying Fairtrade products brings with it a genuine 'feel good' factor knowing your money is also going to improve many people's lives.

"The work these farmers do does not clash with British farmers, so everyone wins.

"The Fairtrade concept deserves support and the more people know about and understand what is behind it, the better quality of living will be bestowed on those who work hard to bring us things like tea, coffee and cocoa."

But there are growing mutterings the Fairtrade organisation doesn't do enough.

Dr Jim Butcher, from the school of human and life sciences at Canterbury Christ Church University, explained: "The Fairtrade town initiative is all about enabling people to buy products that help consumers to tackle poverty in the developing world.

"Yet the Fairtrade emphasis on organics and small scale farming arguably restricts economic development and goes against this claim. In particular the Fairtrade bias against GMOs [genetically modified organisms/crops] may make shoppers feel good but is backward looking. To tackle poverty and feed a growing population requires the application of the latest science and farming techniques."

There is, however, no denying that the Fairtrade movement has made a genuine difference to many.

Adam Gardner is communities campaigns manager at the Fairtrade Foundation. He explained: "Over 620 towns, villages, cities, islands, boroughs and counties across the UK have achieved Fairtrade status since Garstang in Lancashire was declared as the first Fairtrade town in the world in 2001.

"There are now nearly 1,900 Fairtrade towns across six continents – so Fairtrade supporters in Canterbury, Dover or Tunbridge Wells are part of a unique global people's movement for change.

"Since Sevenoaks became the first Fairtrade town in Kent, followed by 10 more towns and districts, awareness of the Fairtrade mark has grown from 57 per cent to over 90 per cent nationally, whilst sales of Fairtrade products have grown by over 300 per cent in that time.

"Fairtrade now reaches over 1.6 million farmers and workers globally, and last year, UK sales of Fairtrade products delivered an estimated £25 million of Fairtrade premiums back to producer organisations to invest in their business and communities.

"Every Fairtrade town in Kent should be proud of their part in this success story but we mustn't be complacent. In 2017, Fairtrade is needed as much as ever, so the committed, and creative support of Fairtrade campaigners in our communities is also needed as much as ever.

"The reality is that nationally, Fairtrade remains the exception, not the rule in too many shops, cafes, and canteens. Whilst Fairtrade bananas account for around a third of the UK banana market, in tea Fairtrade's share is only around five per cent. Under 20 per cent of roast and ground coffee sold in UK supermarkets is Fairtrade, and less than two percent of flowers are Fairtrade.

"Less than one in 10 chocolate bars contain Fairtrade ingredients – all the more shocking when you consider that the average cocoa farmer in the Ivory Coast, one of the world's primary cocoa exporters, earns less than 40p per day."

Key to its success has been not locking horns with any local producers.

As the foundation spokesman explains: "Most Third World commodities simply don't grow in temperate climates.

"Many Fairtrade campaigns, including Canterbury's Fairtrade district, encourage support for both Fairtrade and local produce. The two go hand in hand, as the problems facing small-scale farmers in the Third World and in this country have much in common. Perhaps the main exception is that when commodity prices fall, Third World farmers rarely have any state-funded health system or social security system to fall back on."

Canterbury was an early adopter and, perhaps particularly as it is a university city, the Fairtrade messages continues to ring loud.

The council-baked project promotes those commercial ventures selling Fairtrade products - among them the likes of the Marlowe Theatre and Canterbury Christ Church University.

Thanet went one step further and was declared a Fairtrade island.

Originally set up by the council, it is now completely under the ownership of the Thanet Fairtrade Initiative.

Charlotte Tagart is the chair of the initiative, and she told KoS: "It is hard to tell if there has been an upturn in business. Cafes come and go and there's a lot of 'ethically' produced products out there now that cafes often refer to when asked about Fairtrade.

"It probably is what it says it is but just doesn't have the transparency and rigor of Fairtrade. The Fairtrade mark is definitely very well known now.

"People do still care about it, probably more than ever. Reaching new audiences is our biggest challenge, rather than preaching to the converted."

It took Tunbridge Wells three years to win its Fairtrade status.

Mandy Flashman-Wells, a spokesman for the group said: "When we shop we can easily get stuck buying the things we are used to and don't think about the impact that can have on other people."

Malawi sugar grower Charles Chavi visited Tunbridge Wells recently and revealed the sugar producers there live on £1.80 a day, but the Fairtrade premium has transformed their lives and now have water pumps so that they don't have to go to the crocodile infested river for their water.

Children no longer have to walk five miles to school as a new one has been built and now has 900 students. The growers have been able to invest - buying new tractors for all the farmers to share and bicycle ambulances to take people to hospital. Plus many more now have electricity.

Ms Flashman-Wells said: "Fairtrade is about real people, real lives. When we buy products with the Fairtrade mark we know we are helping other people to live a better life. A life with dignity and respect, where the farmers and workers can make their own choices to improve their community and businesses."

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Fascinating aerial images of our towns over last century

Book on maritime history provides us with stunning pictures of times gone by

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

NEVER-before-seen aerial photos of Kent are to be published in a book on maritime history later this month.

England's Maritime Heritage from the Air is a photographic record of how the country's relationship with the sea has shaped the landscape over the past hundred years.

With more than 150 powerful black and white images, many of them taken looking down on Kent, the book presents an unparalleled picture of how the country has changed from 1919 to 2006.

Among the county landmarks to feature in the book are Chatham, Dover, Folkestone, Hythe, Northfleet, Ramsgate, Sheerness and Whitstable.

The images come from the English Heritage Aerofilms archives and are some of the first aerial photos of England in existence – many taken by photographers strapped to the wings of planes.

Author Peter Waller told us how he had seen the county evolve over the past century.

"It's an interesting exercise, I wanted locations that told a narrative," he said.

"The basic geographical structure doesn't change too much, but you work by identifying specific locations, such as a church, then relate that to modern imagery and work out which structures are still there and which have disappeared.

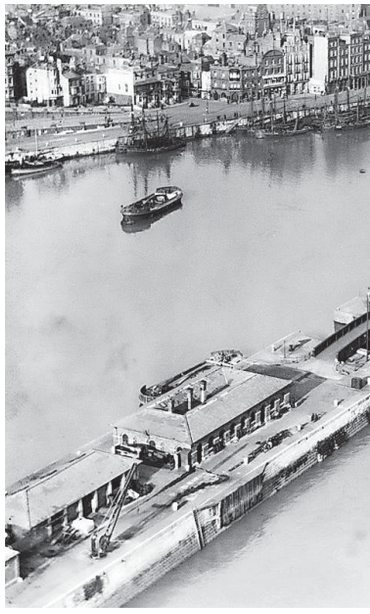
"Take Northfleet, for instance, which was ideal for the cement business, and in terms of shipping in coal and raw materials and then shipping out the finished product.

"Obviously railways became in demand for transporting goods but shipping using the river was much more cost-effective, in bringing coal down the east coast from Newcastle to the Thames Estuary, for example.

"Industries come and go and what the photos demonstrate is how they have changed over time.

"In an early image you might record a power station under construction and then in the 50s or 60s it might have been completely redeveloped because there's constant pressure on land use and demand changes over decades.

SHEERNESS: View from above Sheppey in July 1951



"It's sad in some respects that those historic structures have disappeared, and there is a threat to many others that still exist.

"But it's important to recognise there is such a commercial pressure to invest in the future, and you can't be restricted by the existing environment."

Mr Waller, a specialist in industrial archaeology, has worked in the publishing industry for more than 30 years, and was given unrivalled access to the photos during his time with Aerofilms.

The change witnessed in Ramsgate is one of the most powerful recognised in the book, the Shropshire-based author said.

"I used one of the earliest photos of the port, and another from 2003, to demonstrate how the decades have seen fishing fleet largely disappear to be replaced by a marina for leisure sailing.

"It's a great example of how that port has evolved over an 80-year period, and how society has changed from working ports and fishing, importing goods and materials to a more leisure-based economy."

Later this year, a series of events will take place to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Medway, when the river was engulfed in flames after the Dutch fleet sailed up and caught the English unprepared.

Mr Waller believes as well as boasting a rich history of being the country's first line of defence, the county also has a pivotal role to play in the changing use of the sea in the future.

"Kent has always been on the front line, whether that's from the Dutch or French, or the Germans in the 20th century," he said.

RAMSGATE: Royal Harbour shot form the air in 1920, above

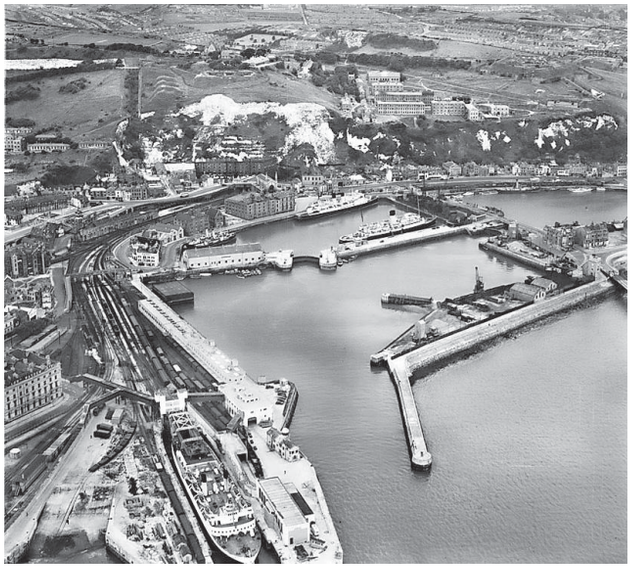
"It still plays a fundamental role in that freight has to go to and from the content via Kent.

"There's a degree of uncertainty about the future, of course, but freight will continue to go through the county.

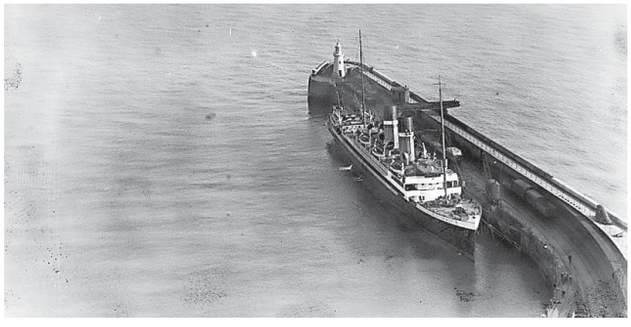
"It's about how you cope with changing traffic patterns and ensuring it's an evolution rather than a revolution."

England's Maritime Heritage from the Air is available to buy from April 28.

WHITSTABLE: Looking down at Whitstable Harbour in the summer of 1937 and, below, Dover hoverport in 1969



DOVER: The busy Western Docks above, pictured just after the Second World War in June 1947 and, below, a cross-Channel steamer docked at Folkestone Pier in February 1920.



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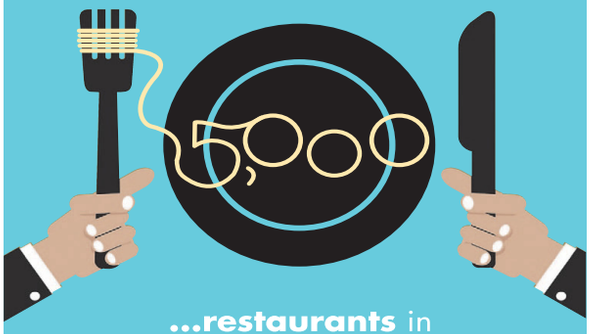

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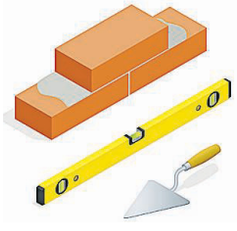

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KOS/15

Moths munching nation's fabric

Some of the county's finest historic homes are facing a new threat - the off-spring of moths which are gnawing holes in carpets, clothing and even stuffed animals. But now English Heritage is fighting back

By Chris Murphy
editorial@archant.co.uk

HISTORIC houses across the county are being eaten alive after a worrying boom in the number of moths and caterpillars.

And as visitors prepare to flock to the sites over Easter - among them the likes of Walmer Castle and Charles Darwin's Down House in Orpington - English Heritage says it is now calling on visitors to help it get a handle on the pests munching their way through historic fabrics.

The conservation organisation is leading the fight back after discovering some priceless fabrics have been damaged by the caterpillars before they turn into moths.

As adults they don't feed - they simply breed and then die leaving some 200 eggs behind. It is these which then hatch into ravenous tiny caterpillars that are causing such expensive damage.

A spokesman for English Heritage explained: "A new carpet went down in Walmer Castle in 2015 and already we are seeing damage caused by the moths' larvae.

"Down House has historic damage to a taxidermy object, a stork.

"The damage occurred prior to the object being returned to us and is currently in store but it illustrates how vital it is that we take care of our collections as these objects are irreplaceable."

Research it has conducted by its team of expert conservators has seen the number of clothes moths double over the past five years, with a new species, monopis sp (also known as the pale backed clothes moth), beginning to appear for the first time.

To combat this threat, English Heritage has launched Operation Clothes Moth and is appealing for the public to help measure the extent of these household pests.

From this week, anyone visiting an English Heritage site will be able to collect a free 'clothes moth trap' to place in their home, which the charity hope will help to map the spread of insect pests across the country.

Amber Xavier-Rowe, head of collections conservation for English Heritage, said: "We regularly monitor insect pest activity to ensure our collections get the best possible care, but any sudden change in species behaviour or increase in numbers is a concern.

"Many people around the country will no doubt know the exasperation of finding clothes moth damage in a much-loved jumper or coat, so we want people to come to our sites, collect a free clothes moth trap, and get involved. While we suspect factors including warmer weather and the increased use of heating inside homes is partly to blame, we hope this campaign helps us to better learn how to combat the rise of the clothes moth."

Clothes moths, particularly the common or webbing clothes moth (tineola bissellella) are a common threat to interiors, as they live indoors and their larvae feed on woollen carpets, clothing, upholstery, fur and even taxidermy, resulting in the appearance of holes or patches.

English Heritage has been actively monitoring the spread of clothes moths since 1995, and now monitors at over 40 sites across the country, with the aim of preventing damage to the over 500,000 historic artefacts in their care across England.

The traps, which are impregnated with the female sex pheromone of the clothes moth, are available now and the charity hopes that feedback from the campaign will help to map the spread of clothes moths across the country, and inform future prevention measures.

THREAT: Walmer Castle is one of those sites which has been affected by the larvae of the moths

GUILTY: The moths responsible

HOLES: Larvae gnaws through fabrics at the likes of Down House, home of Charles Darwin in Downe

HISTORIC PROBLEM OF TACKLING THE PESTS

THE common or webbing clothes moth is known by its scientific name tineola bisselliella. They are a common threat to all sorts of interior materials, but they love wool.

Their lifespan is relatively short, but they are keen breeders and can produce plenty of larvae.

English Heritage said the moths are not only attracted to houses and clothes, but also domestic animals and stored produce.

It said there have been references to clothes moths throughout history.

The charity said it was the conquering Romans that were probably responsible for the spread of pests throughout Europe as they expanded their empire, and there is evidence of infestations in wool by clothes moths in Roman archaeological material.

Even the household of Queen Elizabeth I struggled with insect pests, likely to have been the clothes moth, with records revealing that in 1590, eight men were employed for a full day to beat the furs at Windsor Castle.

And in 1598, six men spent four full days beating and airing the robes at Whitehall Palace and the Tower of London.

The tineola bisselliella is one of the most aggressive of the many moth species.

They are small at up to 8mm long, and they scuttle around, only flying when it is warm. They shun light, hiding in dark areas where they lay batches of eggs on wool, fur, feathers and skins.

The larvae that hatch from the eggs spin silk webbing into a tunnel or sheet across the attacked material. They feed on the fibres of the material, which results in holes in clothes and fabric, or in loss of pile in patches on carpets. Damage is accompanied by copious webbing tubes or sheets, which frequently include large amounts of frass, or insect excreta.

Damage to material may be more concentrated in dark crevices or creases; for example behind lapels, in pockets or where carpets or textiles are folded.

■ **For more information on how to protect your own house from clothes moths, visit the site english-heritage.org.uk/operationclothesmoth**

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POPULAR: Into The Ark had a YouTube following and were approached by Sony before they were famous

Tom Jones' Canterbury gig support act have The Voice

Into The Ark, the ITV show finalists, are joining the judge on tour this summer

THE VOICE finalists Into the Ark will join Tom Jones on stage in Canterbury this summer.

Jones is set to perform for the first time ever in the city, at The Spitfire Ground.

Into the Ark came second in the 2017 edition of ITV's popular talent show under the guidance of their coach, Jones, and generated a fan base as a result of their week-on-week performances on the show.

The Welsh singing duo is made up of Taylor Jones and Dane Lloyd who describe themselves as 'soulful acoustic music from Blackwood, South Wales'.

They met as solo performers and bonded over their love for writing and each other's taste in music. Dane was 14 and Taylor 18.

After some time backpacking around Australia - they headed home to record a four-track EP at a local studio and to start developing a fan base on YouTube.

Whilst performing in hostels in Tunisia, Sony contacted them showing an interest in their YouTube music, which prompted them to come home.

Speaking about why they love music, Lloyd explains: "When we hear Otis Redding sing it transports us to another realm. You can feel the pain, the passion and the soul in it all. Music is the only thing that really gives us this feeling. Like a chef trying to describe why he loves to cook, there are so many different tastes and textures it becomes impossible to pin point why. All you know is you like the way it tastes and I think that's all that matters."

Tom Jones' records have earned him a place as one of the best loved artists of the 1960s, with a musical mix spanning pop, rock, soul, R&B, dance, country and gospel.

He has more than 100 million record sales under his belt, including hits It's Not Unusual, Kiss, Delilah and What's New Pussycat.

His career was recognised in 2006 through his knighthood, and a string of music awards, including BRIT Awards for Best Male and Outstanding Contribution to Music, a Silver Clef Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Hitmaker Award from the [US] Songwriters Hall of Fame, GQ Man Of The Year, and the prestigious Music Industry Trust Award.

The outdoor concert at The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence on July 8 will feature a collection of his most popular hits across the decades - including his latest albums.

Into the Ark will be warming up the crowds ahead of Tom performance.

Jamie Clifford, CEO of Kent County Cricket Club said: "We are really excited to now announce Into the Ark – they are an exceptionally talented duo certain to prove a huge hit with the crowds."

Liz Doogan-Hobbs MBE, CEO of LHG Live, promoter said: "Thrilled to announce Into the Ark as guest for Tom Jones. The duo has completely bowled over the public with their performances on The Voice. They are a unique act with tremendous talent and we are looking forward to seeing them at The Spitfire Ground."

Olly Murs, and Louisa Johnson are acts previously announced also to be playing the venue this summer.

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KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673**

GENTS, please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426345**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

JACKIE is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426343**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

ATTRACTIVE blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426341**

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KAREN, 52yrs, attractive with GSOH, very active and outgoing. If you are 40+ give me a call, lets have a chat, maybe meet up. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426339**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 422365**

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SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 425979**

LADY, 70, 5ft6, divorced, blonde hair, brown eyes, friendly, lives in the Kent area, likes walking, holidays, WLTM somebody for friendship in the local area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426193**

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JANE, attractive and young looking 60 something lady, active, outgoing with interesting personality, hoping to meet a kind gent for occasional meetings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425931**

OCTAVIA, black seductress, 53yrs, waiting to meet you. Pls text me today, **Text Only. Mailbox: 4090520**

GILLY, slim petite lady, affectionate and loving, solvent with own home, hoping to meet gent, must be kind, looks unimportant. ACA/text answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425929**

MERRY widow seeks lovely lonely gent for companionship. Please call, we can have a chat and see how we get on. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425927**

LIVELY 53-year-old female, young in mind, wants discreet fun, loves gardening, dancing music etc and more. **Text only. Mailbox: 5763284**

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JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424491**

SUE, 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424781**

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424675**

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425339**

LINDA, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, wining dining. Age unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425337**

SUE, genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424673**

LOVING lady, romantic and tactile seeks like-minded gent for special times, lets make each other feel special. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425325**

ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425323**

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady, young looking 60s, genuine and kind, seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424671**

HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493**

CAROL, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (so I'm told)! Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424783**

Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received. mydate24

JERRY, 66, brown hair, brown eyes, recently widowed, love to walk my dog, WLTM compatible lady for companionship and to see where things go. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426387**

LOCAL man, seeks lady for friendship possibly more, for romantic dates and good times together, hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426195**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

MALE, 55, looking for no strings attached friendship, with a lady 60-70, any status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426133**

MALE, 6ft, brown hair and blue eyes, warm and understanding, likes dining out and cosy nights in, lots of fun, friendship and holidays. Looking for a lady over 48. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426057**

CARING sociable, GSOH, slim, attractive, married gent, 67, feels discarded and lonely, seeks likewise lady 60+ for trips out, dining etc. **Text only. Mailbox: 5082918**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

MALE, 70s, would like to meet slim lady 60 plus. **Text only. Mailbox: 4505135**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 64, widowed, own house, loves holidays abroad, reading, eating out, eating in and shows, WLTM a lady of similar age to share interests and happy times together hopefully leading to lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425787**

HELLO, mature gentleman looking for a lady who is caring, likes holidays, karaoke, meals out, country walks and cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425401**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

BARRY, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

MALE 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425343**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425331**

GENUINE gentleman, family minded, kind, generous seeks lady 55-75 for wining, dining and wine and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425329**

NICE looking 55 year old male WLTM sincere lady, any age, for friendship, outings, holidays abroad etc. Love the sun. **Text only. Mailbox: 4922399**

DENTAL practitioner, 44, 6ft, slim, athletic build, thick dark hair, blue eyes, loves sports, seeks slim feminine sporty lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425087**

EDWARD, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, wishes to meet attractive female, into music, live bands, cinema and some sports, for nights out socialising and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424979**

HI I'm Darren, down to earth guy, lives in Kent, likes Marbaia, looking for someone special to meet and have a laugh with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424951**

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

NICK, mature male, builder, tattoos, plenty of money, looking for discreet meets, no stings in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424787**

RETIRED, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697**

59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685**

MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679**

CARING 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLTM lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424677**

COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359**

ANDY, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, for fun with no strings attached. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295**

MALE, 52, quiet nature, likes coastal walks, cinema, reading, WLTM lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211**

RICHARD, 64, n/s, from Kent, medium build, clean shaven, likes classic cars, days out, meals out, boot fares, most things, would like to meet a lady for company and to share each others interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424207**

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JOHN, 70, widower, lives in Broadstairs, Kent, slim, fit, active, young at heart, kind, caring and loving, likes country/beach walks, holidays, days out, theatre, eating out, music, animals, WLTM slim, attractive lady, to share interests and nice times together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424043**

LIVELY old boy, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

SLIM, 5ft 6 white male WLTM 18 to 42 year old lady for friendship. **Text only Mailbox: 5441709**

HELLO my name is Paul, 43, 5ft9, from Sittingbourne in Kent, looking for someone to have some fun with and see where it goes! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422905**

Gay Seeking

Join our Gay online service **FREE** visit: ***localgaydate.co.uk***

GAY guy, medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

SIMON, 29yrs, gay curious, seeking older gent for new experiences, must be discreet as I live at home. **Text Only: Mailbox: 4196422**

EASY going guy, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

ROB, bi-curious male, 55, seeks likeminded male, crossdresser/TV. Must be discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426287**

Friends

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No:4748240**

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

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West End legend Elaine Paige knows Kent stages so well

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

THE LEGENDARY Elaine Paige is bringing a greatest hits tour to theatre stages and will be visiting Dartford and Margate.

Paige has promised to perform many of the hits that made her a global star, including Don't Walk Away Until I Touch You, Memory, I Know Him So Well, and Sometimes.

The singer and actress made her West End debut in 1968 when she appeared in Hair. Paige then went on to perform as Eva Peron in the first ever production of Evita, and then claimed another original role as Grizabella in Cats.

As a musical theatre performer Paige has starred in more smash hit West End and Broadway musicals than anyone else of her generation.

Over the years she has been nominated for five Laurence Olivier Awards.

And as a recording artist, she has released 22 solo albums, including four multi-platinum and nine gold, has featured on seven cast recordings and has had worldwide success with songs from her time on the stage, with hits from Cats, Chess, and The King and I.

ACTRESS: Elaine Paige last played in Kent as recently as 2016

She also continues to present the weekly BBC Radio Two programme Elaine Paige on Sunday, which celebrates the best of Broadway, Hollywood and the West End, by playing hits, as well as lesser known musical theatre songs.

At the end of 2013, Paige announced she would be doing a farewell tour celebrating 50 years in show business, however she has since gone on to announce two more series of concerts throughout 2016, and now in 2017 as well.

She last performed in Kent at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre in October 2016, when she was touring with her show, Stripped Back.

Paige is coming to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on October 8, and Margate's Winter Gardens on November 24.

Tickets are now on sale for both shows.

To purchase tickets for Dartford visit orchardtheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01322 220000.

And for the Margate show visit margatewintergardens.com or call 01843 292795.

Alternatively, visit ents24.com/uk/tour-dates/elaine-paige.

Sooty's bringing the magic

THE Sooty Show is coming direct from CITV to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on April 16.

To get tickets to see Sooty, Sweep and Soo perform magic tricks, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

Beer this festival in mind

THE 15th annual Crabble Corn Mill beer and cider festival will be taking place again on May 27 and 28.

Offerings this year come from near and far with a selection of 60 beers from as far afield as Orkney to just down the road in Dover.

For tickets visit ccmt.org.uk

Brahms, Bach and babies

BACH to Baby, the classical concert series for babies, children and parents, is embarking on its third year in Kent starting in Folkestone on May 27.

Visit bachtobaby.com

Hopping shopping day

THE FORUM Shopping Centre, Sittingbourne has announced that on April 15 the Easter Bunny will be making an appearance at the centre.

From 11am until 4pm the bunny will be 'hopping' around posing for photos and handing out free chocolate gifts to shoppers passing by.

Joking around with Nelson

PRANKSTER Lee Nelson has added a Margate show to his Serious Joker tour.

He will be at Margate's Theatre Royal on November 25.

Visit margatetheatreroyal.com for tickets.

Mr Bump's storytelling

THE Mr Men, including Mr Bump, Little Miss Princess, and Mr Tickles will be coming to Tunbridge Well's Royal Victoria Place on April 12, from 11am, for storytime.

Kids will be able to hear stories in hourly intervals but spaces are determind on a first come, first serve basis.

Transport fest's record

A NEAR record-breaking number of 800 vehicles attended the eighth year of the Heritage Transport Show last weekend (April 1).

Visitors saw classics, which were restored by their owners.

Pooch's spotlight moment

IF your pet pooch is the canine equivalent of Brad Pitt or Scarlett Johansson, then they could win a place in the spotlight in the romantic opera La Boheme, coming to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall on April 20, and Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on April 22.

To enter your dog for auditions send a photo to jules@ellenkent.co.uk.

Take That musical to relight Canterbury fire

ByEmily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

IT was announced this week that the Take That musical will be coming to Canterbury.

The Band, which will feature the winning boy band from BBC talent show Let It Shine, will begin a UK tour later this year.

The show follows a group of teenage girls growing up in 1992 as devoted fans of a boyband and revisits them 25 years later when they are 40-something women who try to fulfil their dream of meeting their heroes.

It was written by Tim Firth and will be produced by Take That stars Gary Barlow, Howard Donald, Mark Owen and Robbie Williams, as well as David Pugh and Dafydd Rogers.

Take That said: "We are incredibly proud and excited that our first production as theatre producers is The Band - a musical that we think will touch the hearts of not just our fans, but everyone."

Owen said the girls the show features are an homage to the fans they met when Take That was starting out.

He said: "We met those kids when they were 16 years old, when they were outside our houses and outside our gigs and screaming and we've seen them grow up. And that is the story, to be honest, of Take That."

The band will be played by Kent's own AJ Bentley from Hythe, Nick Carsberg, Yazdan Qafouri Isfahani, Curtis T Johns and Sario Watanabe-Solomon, who won Let It Shine as group Five To Five.

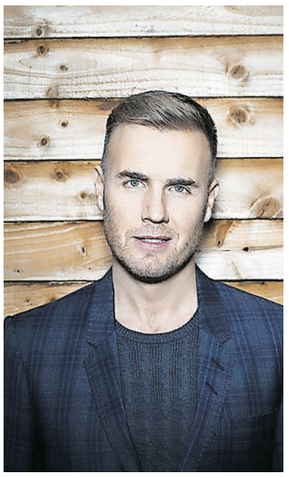
Barlow, who served as a judge on Let It Shine, said it is a new experience to hear other people singing Take That songs.

He said: "This is all new for us, to be able to sit in an audience and watch our music being performed."

He added: "To anyone who's been involved in music at any point in their life, this turns the table and pays respect to those who loved it, supported it, made it part of their lives."

The show will travel to Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre from February 20 to March 3, 2018.

Tickets are on sale now at thebandmusical.com



SHINING: Gary Barlow judged the BBC One competition

RETURNED: Robbie Williams is reported to be involved

www.kentandsussexcottages.co.uk

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Ella's Kitchen taste testing can get 'pretty messy'

Founder, Paul Lindley, says the firm trials new dishes on toddlers because they can only be honest...

IF you want an honest answer, ask a toddler.

They'll make their feelings known, loud and clear - which means product tasting sessions at baby food brand Ella's Kitchen can get pretty messy.

"If they love it, you can really tell. And if they don't like it, they'll throw it on the floor or the walls," says Paul Lindley, who founded the organic firm in 2006 as an alternative to the "invariably orange" jars of baby food available when his own daughter, Ella, was small.

With its handy pouches and colourful, quirky packaging (the current line-up includes a Groovy Greens Veggie Risotto), the small start-up proved a hit with parents and little ones, and is now the biggest baby food business in the UK and sold in 40 countries around the world.

Now, the fourth Ella's Kitchen book - The Easy Family Cookbook - has hit the shelves. A collection of recipes from a company best known for pre-prepared food might sound like a contradiction, but Lindley insists it's all about striking a balance.

"We never say you should have Ella's Kitchen and nothing else. In fact we know most of our customers do a mix. They have home-made food and on occasion, whether things are running late or they're running low in the cupboard, or they're out and about or on holiday or whatever, then there's an alternative they can trust."

The book includes all sorts of colourful recipes, from dunkable cheesy broccoli fritters and sunset jerk chicken, to seaside fish with creamy corn dip and sticky sesame bananas. But there's just as much emphasis on eating together and making mealtime fun as there is on flavour and nourishment, with 'Can I help?' tips on how young children can get stuck into the cooking, and games to play around the kitchen table.

ALTERNATIVE: Paul Lindley was sick of the food available for Ella

"If you involve children in food, however old they are, they're more likely to eat it. Even if it's, 'Let's make a shopping list together', or, 'Let's find it in the shop together'. Even just stirring, or helping to put something into the oven, they're involved in the process," says Lindley.

"Eating together is an increasingly difficult thing, in a world where you've often got two parents working and we're all struggling for time. It is important that you find the time, not only for your own memories and family time, but actually for your child's development and social skills, to eat together."

Ella and her younger brother Paddy - who has a range of bath products, Paddy's Bathroom, named after him - are in their teens now, but Lindley is keen to stay in touch with his inner child at work, where there are games and dressing up days ("being childlike is one of our core values").

"I don't think I ever grew up," Lindley confesses. "I would encourage everyone to 'grow down' and see life through the eyes of a toddler."

When Leo Needs You

LEO SAYER has been performing in the music industry for 43 years, and now he's set for another tour which is coming to Bromley's Churchill Theatre on May 22.

In the years since his first album, he's had five worldwide number one hits, and is a Grammy winning songwriter.

His hits include You Make Me Feel Like Dancing, and When I Need You.

For tickets visit churchilltheatre.co.uk

Grease is the word

FULL casting for Grease, which is coming to Dartford's Orchard Theatre from November 21 to 25, has been announced.

Tom Parker (The Wanted) will play Danny Zuko, Danielle Hope (Over The Rainbow) will take on the role of Sandy, and Louisa Lytton (EastEnders) will play Rizzo.

For tickets and more information visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

Crackin' Easter events

THE Broadway Shopping Centre in Bexley is hosting an array of Easter events in the week leading up to the holiday weekend.

Kids will be egg-static about the cracking egg decorating, and bunny mask making workshops.

For more information on times and dates of workshops visit broadwayshoppingcentre.com

Star Wars exhibit open

STAR WARS Identities: The Exhibition is now open and live at London's O2.

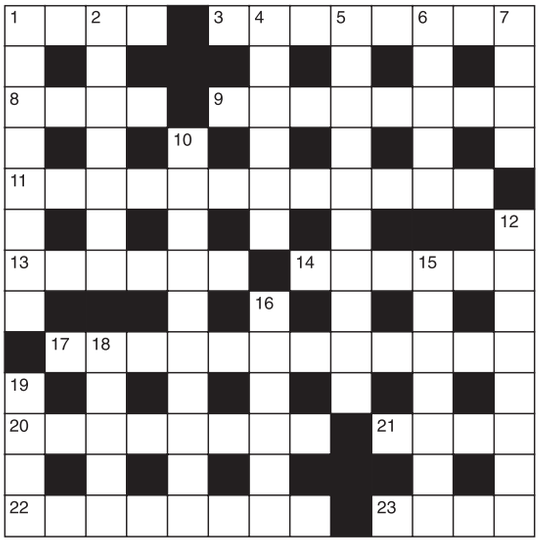
Produced by X3 Productions, the exhibition is an event that explores the magic of the Star Wars universe and its characters.

As they travel through the exhibition visitors will rediscover their favorite characters in a whole new light.

For more information and tickets visit theo2.co.uk/starwars.

PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

1. Restaurant (4)
3. Instructive (8)
8. Close (4)
9. Early nights (8)
11. Preliminary (12)
13. Stimulate (6)
14. Powerful (6)
17. Erasure (12)
20. Aerodrome (8)
21. Travel permit (4)
22. Explode (8)
23. Unite closely (4)

Down

1. Ponder (8)
2. Distraught (7)
4. Eat ravenously (6)
5. Practical (10)
6. Further in (5)
7. Pant (4)
10. Penitence (10)
12. Criterion (8)
15. Building (7)
16. Fanatic (6)
18. Split (5)
19. Territory (4)

Cryptic

Across

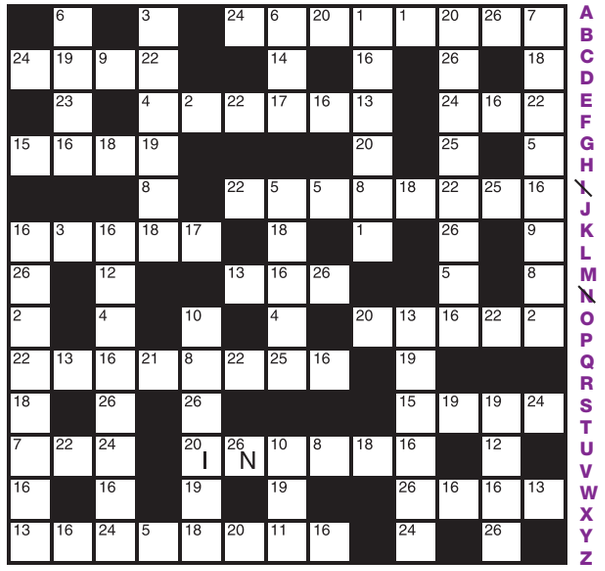
1. This should stop any leakage from Irish port (4)
3. Wagnerian work could create a flap, sir (8)
8. Unscrupulously handles oil installations (4)
9. One who has achieved fame by being shot (4,4)
11. Obliged to sit for an examination? (3,2,3,4)
13. Carriage providing the Frenchman with a seat (6)
14. Unlawful act near a theatre of war (6)
17. Recollection that comes from reconstructed crime in scene (12)
20. Fancies having idols around at home (8)
21. See 7 Down.
22. Superstitious charms revealed if sheets are ripped apart (8)
23. A current feature of Europe used in moderation (4)

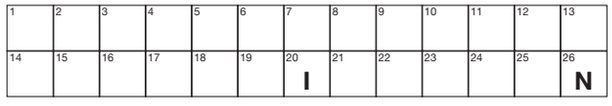
Down

1. Shell the vehicle quickly (8)
2. Upset at great occasion for sailors (7)
4. Settle on fire (6)
5. Homer acts deviously about a classical Aegean island (10)
6. Amounts payable about the end of August for carnivals (5)
7 and 21Ac. Winger not to be trusted, by the sound of it (8)
10. Depression - alcoholic supplies in need of replenishment? (3,7)
12. Fragrant plant to sell in real variety (8)
15. The human race will make a fellow considerate (7)
16. A call at solo whist giving the skinflint a point (6)
18. Make people pay according to obsolete law? (5)
19. It's a bit of a jolt if friends quarrel (4)

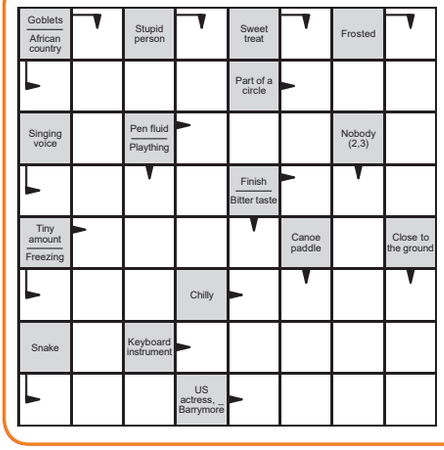
CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.





Arrowword



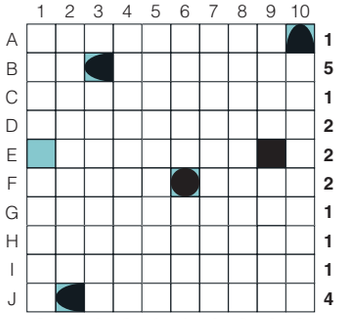
Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

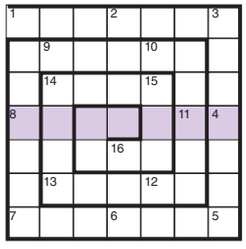
Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET

1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. 'Doing' word
2. Stopper
3. Shine intensely
4. Gorse
5. No votes
6. Counterfoil
7. Prejudice
8. Cummerbund
9. Foot part
10. Public pool
11. Solemn vow
12. Fifty per cent
13. Young deer
14. Common sense
15. Close noisily
16. Repast

Keyword clue: A bird

SUDOKU

Hard

1	7				2			
			8		4		6	
		8						2
	2				7	3		1
	8						9	
5		4	9				7	
4						5		
	1		7		5			
			2				8	9

Easy

	3				8		7	5
6		8		4		9		
7				1			2	4
	7		8		1			
8		5	3		9	1		7
		6			4		8	
9				5			3	
		7	9	3		2		1
3	1				7		9	

Solutions

Arrowword

Battleships

Double Crossword

Cryptic
Across: 1 Cork; 3 Parsifal; 8 Rigs; 9 Film star; 11 Put to the test; 13 Chaise; 14 Crimea; 17 Reminiscence; 20 Imagines; 21 Bird; 22 Fetishes; 23 Odor.
Down: 1 Garagae; 2 Regatta; 4 Alight; 5 Samothrace; 6 Fetes; 7 Lyre; 10 Low spirits; 12 Lavender; 15 Mankind; 16 Miser; 18 Exact; 19 Tiff.

Quick
Across: 1 Cafe; 3 Edifying; 8 Near; 9 Evenings; 11 Introductory; 13 Excite; 14 Potent; 17 Obliteration; 20 Airfield; 21 Visa; 22 Detonate; 23 Weld. Down: 1 Consider; 2 Frantic; 4 Devour; 5 Functional; 6 Inner; 7 Gasp; 10 Contrition; 12 Standard; 15 Edifice; 16 Zealot; 18 Burst; 19 Land.

Codeword
1=M, 2=L, 3=V, 4=P, 5=C, 6=W, 7=G, 8=U, 9=F, 10=J, 11=B, 12=X, 13=D, 14=H, 15=Z, 16=E, 17=Y, 18=R, 19=O, 20=I, 21=Q, 22=A, 23=K, 24=S, 25=T, 26=N

Word Spiral
1 Verb; 2 Bung; 3 Glow; 4 Whin; 5 Nays; 6 Stub; 7 Bias; 8 Sash; 9 Heel; 10 Lido; 11 Oath; 12 Half; 13 Fawn; 14 Nous; 15 Slam; 16 Meal.

Keyword: Swallow

Sudoku - Easy

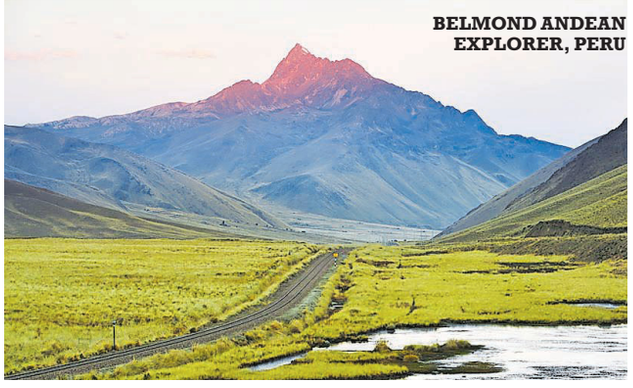
4	3	1	2	9	8	6	7	5
6	2	8	7	4	5	9	1	3
7	5	9	6	1	3	8	2	4
2	7	3	8	6	1	4	5	9
8	4	5	3	2	9	1	6	7
1	9	6	5	7	4	3	8	2
9	6	4	1	5	2	7	3	8
5	8	7	9	3	6	2	4	1
3	1	2	4	8	7	5	9	6

Sudoku - Hard

1	7	5	6	3	2	9	4	8
2	9	3	8	7	4	1	6	5
6	4	8	1	5	9	7	3	2
7	8	1	5	6	3	2	9	4
5	3	4	9	2	1	8	7	6
4	6	2	3	9	8	5	1	7
8	1	9	7	4	5	6	2	3
3	5	7	2	1	6	4	8	9

Flashpacking destinations for 2017

For those that love to be adventurous, but no longer want to rough it in hostels, flashpacking is the travel trend for you. Stay in luxurious hotels and see the world from a comfier point of view, without having to sacrifice ticking certain destinations of your bucket list. Here are the top flashpacking destinations for trips in 2017...



BELMOND ANDEAN EXPLORER, PERU

1 Finland
If you're a fan of walking or hiking holidays, exploring Finland should go straight on your list with the country's 40th national park, Hossa, opening in June to commemorate the centenary of Finland's independence. With the lure of the Northern Lights, husky sledding in Lapland and the cosmopolitan delights of the capital, Helsinki, there's plenty to discover on your flashpacking travels in Finland.

2 California
For those that dream of heading out on a West Coast road trip, but sadly haven't the time for the full 1,650-mile Pacific Coast journey, a two-week Californian adventure will be a great way to start. Beginning in San Francisco, hire a car and take the Pacific Coast highway down through scenic Santa Cruz, Monterey and the Big Sur, before heading on to Los Angeles and finishing in San Diego.

Idelo Travel in Ipswich can provide tailor-made American trips to suit your adventure. idelotravel.co.uk

GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE FROM MARSHALL BEACH IN CALIFORNIA.

3 Peru
Peru has become a top destination for 2017 due to its launch of the first luxury sleeper train in South America next month. The train will take passengers from Cusco to the spectacular Lake Titicaca and on to the city of Arequipa. The Belmond Andean Explorer will travel via one of the highest train routes in the world and will be a way to see the breathtaking scenery of Peru without hiking or camping.

belmond.com

4 Cuba
Since opening diplomatic relations between Cuba and the US, the travel industry has been keen to advise people to visit before the island loses its character, which has certainly helped boost Cuba to the top of the travel charts this year. If you want to experience the real culture of this country, then avoid staying in the resorts and instead travel around the island. Explore Havana, follow the 'Hemingway trail' and visit the UNESCO-listed town of Trinidad.

5 Cape Town
Becoming known for its art and design scene, this is only set to continue with the opening of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art in September. With awe-inspiring scenery, botanical gardens, historical buildings and beautiful beaches, the safari reserves are also not too far away making Cape Town a destination that covers both city break and an exciting adventure.

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Democracy has become warped

EVERY week is a bad week for democracy [KoS letters, last week]. The dictionary states democracy is 'government by the will of the people'. Our leaders think it's just having a vote every few years, while they carry on as they please.

The EU referendum being a good case in point, as MPs continually acknowledge the winning majority, while following it with a 'but', because we didn't know what we were doing, they know better, we weren't presented with the facts and so on.

I have to laugh when they say they invaded Iraq to bring it democracy. First, that it's necessary to bomb people into democracy and second, that they think their corrupted brand of 'democracy' is worth dying for.

On a weekly basis we see decisions made by the 'great pretenders' in Westminster, or in local councils that are deleterious to the electorate to serve politicians' own interests, or those of their big business backers. And they wonder why people are so stressed and angry nowadays!

Phil Granger,
West Malling

So, Ray, how did ice age happen?

IN his letter on March 23, Ray Duff quotes from 'selective' professionals and lay people that global warming is definitely down to humans.

Would he kindly explain how humans generated the global warming that ended the last ice age?

S Reeves,
Herne Bay

Global warming isn't man made

EDWARD Baker's excellent letter last week clearly demonstrates that human agency is not responsible for any global warming which might being taking place.

This can be further proved by a closer look at the facts about the composition of the atmosphere.

Water vapour constitutes Earth's most significant greenhouse gas, accounting for about 95 per cent of Earth's greenhouse effect, and it is 99.999 per cent of natural origin.

Other greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide are also mostly of natural origin and have a negligible effect compared to the water vapour.

There is no evidence to support a direct causal relationship between carbon dioxide and global temperature through the millennia, and the fact we had both higher temperatures, and an ice age, at a time when carbon dioxide levels were ten times higher than they are today fundamentally contradicts the certainty that human-caused carbon dioxide emissions are the main cause of any possible global warming.

Indeed, since 2000 there has been no increase, perhaps a slight decrease, in average global temperature, which negates the validity of the computer models sponsored by the global warming propagandists, as carbon dioxide emissions have continued to accelerate during this time.

It is quite impossible for humanity to regulate the level of water vapour in the atmosphere and, contrary to alarmist claims, carbon dioxide does not cause any significant warming of the Earth, but instead rising levels increase plant growth, and make them more resistant to drought and pests, while improving human nutrition by raising crop yields.

In reality we are living in an unusually cold period in the history of life on Earth, and there is no reason to believe that a warmer climate would be anything but beneficial for humans and the majority of other species.

Evolution ensures that we adapt to the realities of the planet, not vice versa, and it is the ultimate conceit to believe that we can influence this process in any significant way. The destructive policies of the fanatical environmentalists, abandoning reliable sources of energy for ineffectual fantasies, will merely destroy our civilisation, while leaving the planet untouched.

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Profs back our Ray's argument on climate

FIRSTLY I thank Ashford's T Baker for her/his support re: man-made climate change [KoS, letters, last week]; but as for Edward Baker he now tries to use, basically, a version of the old 'oh, it's always been happening' line beloved of skeptics.

The orbital mechanics, ocean current, tine scales and continental drift he mentions are already used by climate scientists as comparisons; using ice-cores and chemical analysis of geological rocks, with modern results from the last 150 years of greenhouse gas emissions. Thus they can now say with certainty humans 'are' the cause of modern warming.

Given the increasingly wilder weather occuring; the unusual heat in the Arctic and Australia, tornadoes in Louisiana, flooding across Europe, severe downpours in India and the fact the planet has been shown to have warmed rapidly by about 0.1-0.2C per decade and average global surface temperatures in 2016 at a record 1.1C above pre-industrial levels, Dr Phil Williamson at the University of East Anglia said in March that "Human-driven climate change is now an empirically verifiable fact; those who dispute that link are not skeptics but deniers".

Just last January Andrey Ganopolski from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany stated: "Our study shows relatively moderate additional anthropogenic CO2-emissions from burning oil, coal and gas are already sufficient to postpone the next ice age for another 50,000 years. The bottom line is we are basically skipping a whole glacial cycle, which is unprecedented. It is mind-boggling that humankind is able to interfere with a mechanism that shaped the world as we know it."

So leaving Mr Granger to wail ineffectually as usual; i'll just wish everyone a happy Easter and leave my alt-fan club to their on-going legerdermain.

Ray Duff
Folkestone

It's what we don't know that is key

I RESPECT Mr Duff's endeavour to discover as much scientific fact that is available from which to draw his conclusions.

However, this restricts his conclusions to what is known.

In a topic like how the universe processes itself and its effect on our planet in terms of global warming, is it likely that we know all the systems of the universe?

Indeed, it's more likely that we known very little.

Pollution in the local atmosphere must be dealt with, of course, like the way we eliminated the London smog.

As we know, global warming and cooling (the ice ages) occured long before mankind's behaviour could be blamed.

Cosmopologists are continually discovering radical new phenomena about 'dark matter' and the speed of the universe's expansion.

Who can say it is impossible that rays from a sun, deep in the universe, can target us or are blocked from us at different times, depending on the movement of the planets inbetween?

Billions of people now living in the world, would have put more pressure on the Earth's surface, sufficient to heat the core to a higher degree which would create more volcanic eruptions, quite probably under the oceans or the ice caps, which have not been found yet.

Is it not possible that global warming needs to take place so that a future potential ice age is not sufficient to wipe us out?

It seems to me that the effect of greenhouse gases on global warming would be insignificant.

D Hedges,
Chatham

They could be worth £1 again!

WITH the £1 coin that we have at the moment going of usage in six months' time, instead of throwing it away when it cease to be legal tender, people should keen them for the future.

When old coins have become collectors' items in 20 or 30 years time, they'll sell for a high price at auction.

Rosie Johnston,
Ightham

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Guidhall at Faversham

by **Brian Summers**

To see your photograph printed, email **editorial@kosmedia.co.uk**,. Be sure to include your name, address and a contact telephone number. Unfortunately we cannot return any prints, and please do not send negatives.

Bradstow School
living and learning together
within a Culture of Gentleness

BRADSTOW SCHOOL

34 Dumpton Park Drive, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1BY

Bradstow is a creative and unique all age residential special school registered as a children's home, and maintained by the London Borough of Wandsworth. It is situated in spacious grounds just a few hundred metres from the beautiful beaches of Broadstairs in Kent. We seek to meet the needs of children and young people with autism and severe intellectual disabilities, with associated complex behaviours that challenge. We have achieved international recognition for our Gentle Teaching approaches and business excellence model. The school is judged to be outstanding by Ofsted for care and education.

KEYWORKER – Extended Provision

Working as part of the childcare team, this role involves providing care and support to young people in the residential home and being a young person's keyworker

£22,667 - £25,671 per annum - 41 hours per week. All year round

TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS – Residential Care

As part of the childcare team, this role involves providing care and support to young people in the residential home. For this role candidates are required to have some experience of care work.

£15,238 – 15,507 plus 10% per annum - 41 hours per week, (including weekends) – Term time only, plus 2 weeks *

TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS – Education

These roles involve being responsible for assisting teachers in a classroom setting. Experience in this field is desirable.

£13,936 – £14,182 per annum - 37.5 hours per week (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 pm Monday – Friday), Term time only, plus 2 weeks *

CHILDCARE SUPPORT ASSISTANTS

As part of the childcare team, this role involves providing care and support to young people in the residential home No experience of care work is required.

£13,146 – £13,327 10% per annum – 36.5 hours per week, (including weekends) Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

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This involves being responsible for assisting teachers in a classroom setting. No previous experience is required.

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FLEXIBANK TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS

We have additional opportunities to cover within either the classrooms or residences on an as required hourly paid basis, up to 41 hours per week, including split shifts and weekends. Please contact us for further details.

***For these roles there will also be up to a maximum of ten days for the school's short term break provision if required, for which an extra payment would be made.**

For all posts we look for candidates who display maturity and are warm, creative and open to learning. Candidates must have a patient and caring attitude and be able to deal sensitively with vulnerable children.

We are committed to sustainability and preserving the environment and therefore encourage applications by email, so for an application form and information pack please email personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk. Or call 01843 608727 (24 hour recruitment answer machine).

Please note that we are unable to accept CVs.
All appointments are subject to a DBS check
All shortlisted applicants will be expected to visit the school before interview.
Bradstow School is an equal opportunities employer.
The closing date for all applications is Friday 14th April 2017.
Interviews to be held April/May 2017

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Motability

*2017 C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £595 Advance Payment. Model shown is C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £1,795 Advance Payment, AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift at Nil Advance Payment, Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual at £95 Advance Payment, Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual at £895 Advance Payment and Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual at £295 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st April and 30th June 2017. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme.

C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 38.1 (7.4), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1), Combined 47.8 (5.9). CO_2 Emissions 135g/km. AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 Emissions 95g/km. Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 74.3 (3.8), Combined 65.7 (3.8). CO_2 Emissions 110g/km. Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 47.9 (5.9), Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2), Combined 58.9 (4.8). CO_2 Emissions 112g/km. Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 53.3 (5.3), Extra Urban 68.9 (4.1), Combined 62.8 (4.5). CO_2 Emissions 119g/km. All mpg and CO_2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

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driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

REVIVED: After creating the crossover sector, now Nissan fancies re-energising its supermini credentials with a highly sophisticated and sharp-suited fifth-generation Micra

Nissan Micra-manages a revival of its super-mini

NISSAN'S best known UK model used to be the Micra supermini.

It was also built here at the Japanese marque's Sunderland plant, but overshadowed when that site started producing Qashqais in 2007, to create the crossover sector.

The 2010 fourth generation Micra didn't help either; more conventional and less funky than before, it was built in the Far East to cut costs, and it showed, failing to please European and UK drivers.

But Nissan reckons it can 'Micra-manage' recovery with the fifth-generation car (from £11,995) with customisable packaging to appeal to image-conscious buyers in the Mini/Fiat 500 niche.

With input from Nissan's impressive tech centre at Cranfield, Beds, the newcomer is longer, wider and lower, with a racy five-door wedge profile.

Perhaps even more impressive, is a chassis spun from the old car and now arguably the class leader, with no apparent compromise between sharpness and comfort.

Three engines are offered for now: a 70bhp 1.0-litre petrol and two 89bhp units, a 0.9-litre petrol turbo and 1.5-litre turbodiesel.

The lively petrol turbo is the star, though the three-cylinder unit develops the type's all too familiar 'pheasants under the bonnet' racket when revved, making the diesel comparatively refined, though its extra weight mars the newcomer's nimbleness and there's a £1,330 upfront premium.

The upweight in cabin space, quality, design and appeal is welcome though.

The result is class-leading front seat space, through forward/rearward seat travel and rake/reach-adjustable steering wheel.

But the engineers clearly wanted this space to be uplifting too, hence what they call the 'gliding wing' dashboard plus upmarket touchscreen infotainment and optional BOSE sounds. Safety features are also high for a small car.

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KENT LIFE

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Representative Example.

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IS 300h prices start from £28,995. Model shown is IS 300h SPORT £31,495, excludes optional metallic paint at £610.
*2.9% APR Representative, £1,500 Finance Deposit Allowance and £1,500 Centre contribution. 24-42 months only on Lexus Connect (PCP), up to 35% deposit and Guaranteed Future Value/Optional Final Payment. IS new retail sales. Ordered and proposed for finance between 1 April 2017 and 30 June 2017, registered and financed by 30 September 2017 through Lexus Financial Services. Excess mileage charges apply. Other finance offers available but cannot be used in conjunction with this offer. Participating Lexus Centres. Lexus Centres are independent of Lexus Financial Services. Terms and conditions apply. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status to over 18s only. Lexus Financial Services is a trading name of Toyota Financial Services (UK) PLC. Registered Office: Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, KT18 5UZ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. ^3 Years Free Servicing entitles the owner to first 3 Manufacturer scheduled servicing in first 3 years or 30,000 miles of ownership, whichever comes soonest when purchased on a Lexus Connect PCP contract before 30 April 2017. Services must be taken at supplying Lexus Centre.

The MPG figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results. They are provided for comparability purposes, and may not reflect actual driving experience. IS 300h SPORT fuel consumption and CO2 figures: urban 60.1 mpg (4.7 l/100km), extra-urban 58.9 mpg (4.8 l/100km), combined 61.4 mpg (4.6 l/100km), 107g/km CO2 (20% BIK).

LEXUS
EXPERIENCE AMAZING

IS this the Lexus to finally beat its rivals?

Does the newly facelifted compact executive car from Toyota's luxury arm now have the weapons to take on the Germans? Steve Loader gets behind the wheel

Lexus IS300h Advance Auto

Price:	from £33,695
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	BMW 3 Series

LIKE an outing with the kids, the phrase "are we there yet?" keeps coming to mind for the Lexus IS.

Now on its third generation and newly facelifted, this rear-driven compact executive saloon from Toyota's luxury arm has certainly had enough goes at catching its arch rivals, the BMW 3 Series and Mercedes C-Class.

And the German duo has so far eluded the Japanese wannabe's best efforts, which also ignore manual gearbox, diesel and estate car options.

But maybe the Lexus doesn't need to change now to catch up; the world is changing and the petrol-only IS range – including the hybrid tested here – looks more environmentally appealing to company car user-choosers than diesel dominated German line-ups.

The IS holds its value well in the used market too and now has a clear style of its own, enhanced by new full LED headlamps, large air intakes and a revised Lexus grille.

These combine to make the car look more aggressive and sportier and chime well with the distinctive upswept sill line at the back.

The test car also impressed with its metallic paint job, a £610 option in 'Sonic Titanium' – gunmetal to you and me; I have never had so many comments about a review car's exterior finish.

And that gets to the heart of the Lexus' appeal: it might not be the most dynamic car in class – the sharp suit flatters to deceive a little – but it oozes quality inside and out and looks exceptional value from £29,995 for the hybrid, with its 178bhp 2.5-litre petrol engine and 141bhp electric motor.

A racier 242bhp 2.0-litre four-cylinder petrol turbo engine (0-62mph in seven seconds) is offered from £38,745 but the hybrid (8.4 seconds) is the focus for most buyers, offering limited all-electric power for short low-speed periods, providing you husband enough power through braking and judicious use of the accelerator.

While this might sound dreary, 'good hybrids' do bring a different driving mentality, so you find yourself looking even further ahead for situations to reclaim energy or save the car's petrol engine intervening too heavily - tactical driving, if you like.

On the other hand, you can just drive it; fuel consumption won't be the 66mpg quoted as the official combined figure but the IS is an economical low emission car (101g/km CO2).

True, the foot-dragging CVT (continuously variable transmission) is boring, but the car has decent handling and ride comfort. The hybrid's underfloor batteries do compromise boot space slightly, but the IS is a truly premium option.

New Renault CLIO Dynamique Nav 1.2 16V 75
From £149 per month*

Renault CAPTUR Dynamique Nav TCe 90
From £159 per month*

Renault KADJAR Dynamique Nav TCe 130
From £199 per month*

The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the cars shown are: urban 39.2 (7.2)–47.1 (6); extra-urban 60.1 (4.7)–62.8 (4.5) combined 50.4 (5.6)–55.4 (5.1). The official CO_2 emissions are 127–114g/km. Figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EU Legislation and may not reflect real-life driving results.

*New Clio Dynamique Nav 1.2 16v 75 monthly payment based on £2,584 deposit, 36 monthly payments of £149, optional final payment of £5,277. Captur Dynamique Nav TCe 90 monthly payment based on £3,584 deposit, 36 monthly payments of £159, optional final payment of £6,537. Kadjar Dynamique Nav TCe 130 monthly payment based on £3,491 deposit, 36 monthly payments of £199, optional final payment of £9,870. Finance provided by Renault Finance, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FJ. Subject to status. Indemnities may be required. UK residents only (excluding the Channel Islands). Over 18s. Terms and conditions apply. Offer based on 6,000 miles per annum, excess mileage 8p per mile inc VAT. Finance available on selected new vehicles when ordered and registered by 30 June 2017. Excludes New Clio Expression models. New Clio shown has optional i.d metallic paint, at an extra £625. Captur shown with optional metallic paint, and painted roof at an extra £894. Kadjar shown has optional i.d metallic paint, at an extra £645. †The Service Plan covers the manufacturer's minimum maintenance programme requirements. The Service Plan does not cover wear-and-tear items such as (but not limited to) tyres, brakes or wiper blades. Mileage and age restrictions apply. For full servicing terms and conditions visit: www.renault.co.uk/serviceplan. Service plan applicable on all new vehicles when ordered with Renault Finance by 15 May and registered by 30 June 2017. The free service plan offer must be redeemed within 28 days of the vehicle Registration date. Excludes Clio Renault Sport, Twingo and ZOE. Retail customers only. For full T&Cs visit renault.co.uk/offers.

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Dover

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Salary: £16,482.75 per annum
Closing Date: 19 April 2017
Interview Date: 27 April 2017

Qualifications and Experience

- Mathematics and English (GCSE or equivalent) grade C or above
- 2+ years experience in an administration environment
- Excellent IT Skills
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The interview will include a basic PC and aptitude test.

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Danielle Edwards, Business Office Supervisor, on 01304 222672

For job description and application form please visit our website: www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

highways england

A20 TRUNK ROAD - NEAR DOVER
TEMPORARY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

Notice is hereby given that Highways England Company Limited intends to make an Order on the A20 Trunk Road in the County of Kent, under Section 14(1)(a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, because works are proposed to be executed on the road.

The effect of the Order would be to:-

1) authorise the overnight closure of:-
   a) the coast-bound carriageway of the A20 between White Horse Hill Interchange (A260) and Courtwood Interchange (B2011);
   b) the London-bound carriageway of the A20 between Limekiln Roundabout and White Horse Hill Interchange (A260);
   c) the slip roads leading to and from the London-bound carriageway of the A20 at Courtwood Interchange (B2011);
   d) the slip road leading from the coast-bound carriageway of the A20 at Courtwood Interchange (B2011);
   e) the slip road leading to the coast-bound carriageway of the A20 at White Horse Hill Interchange (A260);
   f) the slip road leading from the London-bound carriageway of the A20 at White Horse Hill Interchange (A260); and
   g) the bus stop adjacent to the carriageway described in b) above between points 290 metres and 340 metres west of Limekiln Roundabout;
2) authorise the 24-hour closure of all lay-bys adjacent to the carriageways described in 1) a) and b) above; and
3) impose, for 24-hour periods:-
   a) a 40 mph speed limit on the westbound carriageway of the A20 between points 20 metres and 120 metres west of Western Heights roundabout; and
   b) a 50 mph speed limit on;
      i) the westbound carriageway of the A20 from 120 metres west of Western Heights roundabout to White Horse Hill Interchange (A260);
      ii) the slip roads leading to and from the westbound carriageway of the A20 at Courtwood Interchange (B2011); and
      iii) the slip road leading from the westbound carriageway of the A20 at White Horse Hill Interchange (A260).

These measures would be in the interests of road safety while contractors undertake resurfacing, road marking and all associated work, and bridge and structural repairs.

It is expected that the road maintenance work would last for approximately 11 weeks starting on or after Monday 8th May 2017. The overnight closures would take place between 20:00 and 06:00 (maximum period).

The Order would come into force on 6 May 2017 and have a maximum duration of eighteen months.

During the overnight closures outlined above, traffic affected would be diverted using the A260, A256, A259, and the B2011.

The carriageway closures, slip road closures, lay-by closures, speed restrictions and diversion routes would be clearly indicated by traffic signs when they are in operation during the works period.

M Taylor, an Official of Highways England Co Ltd.
Ref: HE/SE/2017/A20/53

Highways England Company Limited, (Company No 9346363). Registered Office: Bridge House, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4LZ. A company registered in England and Wales.

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(Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925.

Any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 3 Crouch Hill Court, Lower Halstow, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 7EJ who died on the 31st October 2015 are required to send particulars therof in writing to the undersigned within two months of publication after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interest of which they have had notice.

COUNTY SOLICITORS
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Kent ME8 7HX

LICENSING ACT 2003:

Application for GRANT of Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that

The Tunbury School Association

of Tunbury Primary School, Tunbury Avenue, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent ME5 9HY

has applied to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council for the GRANT of

Live Music 14:00 hours to 19:00 hours

Recorded Music 14:00 hours to 19:00 hours

Performance of Dance 14:00 hours to 19:00hrs

for the premises Tunbury Primary School situated at Tunbury Avenue, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent ME5 9HH

Any person wishing to submit representations about the proposals should make them in writing to: Licensing Services, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4LZ giving in detail the grounds of objection by 04/05/2017

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary of conviction for the offence is £5000.

Clifford positive about T20 plans

The ECB wants to create an IPL-inspired tournament by 2020

Cricket

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

PLANS for a city-based T20 tournament are "bound to spill over" and bring more cricket supporters to Kent, the club's chief executive has said.

The county has been one of the most vocal critics of the proposals put forward by the ECB to create an English version of the successful Indian Premier League and Big Bash by 2020.

The move is designed to drive up participation and interest among a younger audience and raise the profile of the sport generally.

After receiving reassurances that the competition would not interfere with the existing T20 Blast and county championship formats, CEO Jamie Clifford told KoS it had now reached a stage where the county had to be supportive.

"There comes a point where, if there's an inevitability about what's going to happen, we have to get behind it and make it as good as it possibility can be," he said.

"We know there will be eight teams and those teams will play at various venues and we know county cricket will carry on, but we've got three more seasons before then.

"All I know is it would be very unusual for Kent not to want to play a massive part in the future of the game, however that is shaped.

"We represent the second highest population of recreational cricketers in the country behind Yorkshire, we've got 3.2 million people living inside Kent and the four London boroughs allocated to us.

"That's a big population and we've got to make sure those people are fully engaged in whatever the future holds, and we'll work hard to make sure that's the case.

"If the game enjoys a resurgence in terms of profile and participation and people following, you would expect there to be a positive knock-on to county cricket, so is it the beginning of the end? Far from it.

"If you watch a T20 game in the new competition and you like it, but you live in Folkestone, why would you not want to come to a Blast game at Canterbury? It's bound to spill over."

BOSS: Kent Cricket CEO Jamie Clifford

Pictures: ADY KERRY

Bromley teen sparkles on competitive debut

Motorsport

BROMLEY teenager Jack McCarthy announced his arrival into the Renault UK Clio Cup in dramatic style last weekend with a sensational performance in timed qualifying before going on to establish himself as a genuine front-runner in the following two races.

In his first ever competitive outing in a car, the Team Pyro driver set the third-fastest time around Brands Hatch with a lap of 51.779s and when it came to determining the grid positions for the second race – by virtue of the drivers' second-best laps – Jack was second-fastest with a sensational 51.819s.

Later that same day, the opening round of the 2017 season, saw the teen set out on a soaking track and carry the fight to his far more experienced rivals.

JACK: Photo by Jakob Ebrey

As Lee Pattison and Mike Bushell vied for the lead, Jack was keeping former champion Paul Rivett at bay.

Letting the car run wide, Jack created a chance for the flying James Dorlin, who nipped through to nick fourth place, leaving Jack to cross the line fifth.

Sunday's second race was contested in front of a huge crowd and broadcast live on ITV 4, and fans were treated to another promising show from the teenager.

Jack was running confidently in second place and as he attempted a pass on team-mate Bushell, the latter defended forcing him to take evasive action and allowed the pursuing Pattison and Rivett through.

Jack currently lies fourth overall in and heads the Graduates Cup, for young, first year drivers.

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

Burman admits Darts may be feeling the heat

DARTFORD boss Tony Burman has suggested his players may be suffering from the pressure of being near the top of the National League South.

The Darts were held to a disappointing draw against 10-man Hemel Hempstead last Saturday, and Burman hinted there could be some jitters among his players as the business end of the season now looms large.

"I felt the players worked really hard on Saturday and I think we all realised that once a team go down to 10 men its not always easy to play against," Burman told the club's website.

"There seems to be a lot of tension in the performances of the team of late which for me is affecting their decision making and their performance as individuals and as a group.

"We all know that the players have been excellent this season and on the plus side we have once again come back from a defeat to gain a valuable point towards our target for the season."

MANAGER: Tony Burman

HOME: Gillingham's Priestfield

G s k k forgot to pack shirts

GILLINGHAM have sacked the club's kit man after the players' shirts were left in Kent before last weekend's trip to MK Dons.

Sources at Priestfield confirmed Bob Lewin had left the club following the mistake, which meant the Gills were minutes away from having to play their League One clash in their training kit.

The home side had printed numbers on the back of the training kits for the visitors, which the referee approved of.

However, the proper shirts did arrive just 15 minutes before kick-off in Milton Keynes, though the club took ruthless action by relieving Mr Lewin of his duties on Monday.

Replacing him as kit man is Malcolm Stedman, a long-serving member of the Gills' backroom team.

Ebbsfleet expect ticket scramble

AN ADVANCE ticket sale has been introduced for Ebbsfleet United's crunch National League South clash with Maidenhead United later this month.

A sell-out crowd is expected when Daryl McMahon's side travel to York Road on April 22, as the top two teams in the division meet in a game that could prove crucial in deciding who wins promotion to the National League.

The club will be selling the 600 available tickets to season ticket holders on Monday and on general sale on Tuesday at Stonebridge Road, with no online or telephone sales available.

Adults tickets are £10, seniors and students £6 and under-16s £3.

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